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EARLY  
CHRISTIAN  
SYMBOLISM

*PAUL JOSEPH SACHS*

NEW ENGLAND  
DEPOSIT LIB.



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(From W. Palmer)

With the kindest  
regards

Rome 20 April 1874

Chas. Warren Stoddard.

AN INTRODUCTION

TO

EARLY CHRISTIAN SYMBOLISM.

LONDON  
PRINTED BY SPOTTISWOODE AND CO.  
NEW-STREET SQUARE

AN INTRODUCTION  
TO  
EARLY CHRISTIAN SYMBOLISM,

BEING THE DESCRIPTION OF A  
SERIES OF FOURTEEN COMPOSITIONS  
FROM  
FRESCO-PAINTINGS, GLASSES, AND SCULPTURED SARCOPHAGI ;

WITH THREE APPENDICES:

SELECTED AND ARRANGED  
BY WILLIAM PALMER, M.A.  
Late Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford;

AND PAINTED BY SIGNOR BOSSI, OF ROME.

LONDON  
LONGMAN, GREEN, LONGMAN, AND ROBERTS.  
1859



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## PREFACE.

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OF the Fourteen Compositions described in the following pages, the first alone occurs as a whole in the "Catacombs" (in the Cemetery of S. Callistus): and it was this which suggested to the Author the idea of putting together other Compositions in a somewhat similar form, like triptychs, with a systematic arrangement of subjects.

The Paintings and Glasses of these fourteen Compositions exhibit to the eye the Christianity of the third century, though possibly some one or other of them may belong to the second, and several of them certainly belong to the fourth. Such as belong to the fourth, if later than the accession of Constantine but still contemporary with the tombs at which they occur, are distinguishable by the *aureole* round the heads of the figures, and sometimes by other signs, such as the presence of the monogram, or the presence or vicinity of dates and names of Consuls, &c. But paintings not contemporaneous, added in the fourth century, or later, near tombs which were specially honoured, after the Cemeteries had

ceased to be in general use, and even after they had been rifled by the barbarians, are easily known, both by traces of alterations made in the crypts or galleries where they occur, and also by a marked difference of style and costume in the paintings themselves.

The sculptures from Christian sarcophagi at Rome (and in two instances from sarcophagi at Arles), which have also been used in these Compositions, represent the symbolism of the fourth and fifth centuries. Such sculptures on sarcophagi hold the same place in the crypts of the first Basilicas founded under Constantine and his successors, as the fresco paintings and glasses hold in the "Catacombs" of the first three centuries.

The symbolism of the paintings, glasses, and sculptures is absolutely the same, though in the fourth century slight variations and additions become noticeable in the treatment of details. A limited number of subjects, eighteen or twenty perhaps, are repeated over and over again; so that when once the general principle running through all, and the Christian application of each subject is known, it is easy to recognise them, however they may be varied or abbreviated.

After the sculptured sarcophagi there follow in order of time the mosaics of the churches of Rome and Ravenna, beginning from the fifth century; but of these, beyond one or two incidental allusions, no use has been made in the present work.

The reader will wish to know how far the parts of the Compositions described are in themselves and in the style of their reproduction to be depended upon as copies from the originals referred to. Care therefore has been taken in describing each to give information on this head.

As regards the separate paintings and sculptures grouped together in each Composition, the drawings of them have mostly been taken from the plates of Bosio and Aringhi as reprinted by Bottari (*Roma Sotterranea*, 3 vols. fol., A.D. 1737—1754). The glasses may all be found in the complete Collection recently published by the living antiquary P. Garucci. In a few cases, as for parts of Compositions A, D, F, K, L, and M, it was necessary to have recourse to the Catacombs; but many of the other paintings selected were already familiar to the artist, Signor Bossi, who had copied them for some one or other of the living antiquaries of Rome, comparing the plates of the *Roma Sotterranea* with the originals, and taking notes of the colouring. One or two are from fac-similes of the originals in the Christian Museum of the Lateran. In some cases, again, the published engravings have preserved representations the originals of which have disappeared since the time of Bosio; and wherever any one of these has been inserted, the colours have been added from the analogy of other similar paintings. In the case of sculptures and glasses

there could be no need, for the sake of colouring at least, of any re-examination of the originals.

As regards the idea on which the separate paintings, glasses, and sculptures have been selected and grouped together, this belongs only to the writer, who is far from wishing to suggest that the early Christians painted their doctrines about the tombs of martyrs *systematically*, or for the purpose of *teaching*. The truth is, that when they first made small chambers or crypts opening out of the galleries of their cemeteries, and afterwards multiplied such crypts for those of their dead that were likely to attract living visitors, it was natural for them to paint these chambers, and the arched tombs cut in them, in the same style which was used by the heathens their contemporaries; only instead of mythological or other heathenish subjects they substituted, in the compartments of their ceilings, and on the walls, and within the archings over their tombs, paintings of their own, congenial to their own belief and feelings. Their souls being full of certain ideas which had a true mutual relation one to another, and which altogether formed one coherent system, it was likely enough that what they painted or sculptured about the same tomb or sarcophagus, or in the same crypt, should sometimes take the form of a composition. In point of fact, the first, the most comprehensive, and the most complete of the series of Compositions about to be described actually occurs as

a whole in the Cemetery of S. Callistus ; and in several other cases also, as in B 1, C 3 *b, c*, F 1, G 3 *e*, H 1, I 1, and N 1, distinct *compositions* occur, though on a lesser scale. Still, speaking generally, the arrangement of the Compositions in the present work is no more to be ascribed to the early Christians, than the scientific classification of plants in an herbarium, or of living creatures in a zoological work, is to be ascribed to nature. Such arrangements, however, are useful ; and, far from giving any false or perverted notion of the separate parts, they teach at a glance, by the comparison and juxtaposition of groups, what would not be seen at once, nor so clearly, if each representation presented itself separately, as in a purely antiquarian Collection.

The Author returns his thanks to the Rev. Fathers MARCHI and GARUCCI, the Chevalier DI ROSSI, the Rev. Mr. NORTHCOTE, and others, from whose kindness he has obtained assistance or information.



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# AN INTRODUCTION

TO

## EARLY CHRISTIAN SYMBOLISM.

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### I. COMPOSITION A. — *Of the Dispensation.*

THESE three paintings, A 1, 2, and 3, all occur together in the Cemetery of S. Callistus; A 1 on the end wall, A 2 and 3 on the two side walls of one and the same "arcisolum," or arched tomb. The *Rock*, which is Christ, being visible in all the three paintings, shows them at the first glance to be one composition, though in the publication of M. Perret the two lateral paintings only are given, and the central one (which has been damaged by the cutting in of a later niche through the breasts of the figures) is omitted. Owing to this omission it was necessary, in 1855, to send the artist employed to copy this whole Composition in the Cemetery itself, permission having been obtained through the kindness of P. Marchi. Since then a copy, of the full size of the original, and showing exactly the damage done to it, has been placed in the Christian Museum of the Lateran. In the present work, *the purpose of which is not antiquarian*, the central painting is

7

B


restored. This was done with ease and certainty, as the later tomb, cut through its centre in the original, has left the attitudes of the figures unimpaired. In the original of A 3, also, a small arched recess, perhaps intended to serve as a credence, has been cut, which has been filled up, and in one unimportant point conjecturally, as it is not clear whether the rod in the hand of the central figure is directed towards one of the baskets brought by the other two men, or towards the nearest of those other baskets which stand on the ground. The damage done to the paintings of this and other tombs, in order to bury near the martyrs their occupants, is a sign of the greater antiquity of the tombs and paintings so damaged. For while the date of the niches cut in is probably not later than some time in the fourth century, before the underground cemeteries had ceased to be in general use, it is also clear that when they were cut the arched tomb of the martyrs which was damaged was already so old that nobody was likely to be annoyed by its mutilation. Supposing, then, the later niche over and within this arched tomb to have been cut in about the middle of the fourth century, we may probably refer the original tomb, with its paintings, to the middle of the third. Thus much premised, we go on to describe the paintings.

In the middle of A 1 we see Christ as the Good Shepherd, with the lost sheep of human nature on his shoulders. Hereby is signified the universal redemption, in which even Judas himself is included. But in the two sheep which stand one on either side of the Good Shepherd, at his feet, turning their heads towards him, we see the flock of his elect, all who shall belong to Christ by faith and good works, and shall be found in him at the end. The number *two*, which here signifies all,

hints also those twofold divisions which are applicable, viz. those of the antediluvian and the postdiluvian worlds; of the Patriarchal or Gentile covenant made with Noah, and the covenant of Circumcision made with Abraham; again, the Mosaic and the Christian Dispensations; and, in the Christian, the double Church, of the Circumcision, represented by S. Peter, and of the Uncircumcision, represented by S. Paul; the two sexes, men and women; those that persevere after Baptism without falling, and those that fall but are restored by repentance. And as, after the Ascension and the day of Pentecost, Christ collects and feeds this flock of his elect, not personally on earth, but through the ministry of his Apostles and of the hierarchy, we see two men, who are the two Apostles Peter and Paul, representing the whole Apostolate from the beginning to the end, hastening away from Christ, as sent by him to the world. On either side, before each of the two, there rises a rock, which is Christ himself, the true Rock of the desert, pouring down spontaneously, as on the day of Pentecost, after the Ascension, streams of living waters. These waters, which he pours down from the Father, are the gifts of the Holy Ghost, including all the sacraments and graces of Christianity. The Apostles are seen joining their hands together to catch this water, in order to turn it afterwards on to our heads, *i. e.* in order to communicate it to the world. The world to which they are sent is represented by two sheep standing before each of them. On one side, to our right, one of the two sheep is listening attentively, not quite understanding as yet, but meditating, and seeking to understand: the other turns his tail: it is an unwelcome subject, and he will have nothing to do with it. On the other side, to our left, one of the two sheep is drinking in all that he hears

with simplicity and affection : the other is eating grass ; he has something else to do ; he is occupied with the cares and pleasures and riches of this world.

Then, for the ways in which the Apostles, both at first and afterwards, communicate to those good sheep which hear them the living waters from the rock, we have in the lateral painting A 2 an allusion to Baptism, and in A 3 an allusion to the Eucharist ; that is, allusions to the two sacraments of the new or spiritual birth, and the new or spiritual food. But birth and food, beginning and continuance, are our whole life.

In A 2 we again see the Rock, that is, Christ, now no longer, as on the day of Pentecost and as in the central painting, pouring down its streams of water spontaneously, but under the stroke of the rod of Moses held in the hand of Peter ; that is, through the ministry of the hierarchy which he represents. The mark like an  on his robe is said by antiquaries to have come into fashion at Rome under Commodus, in the latter part of the second century. The proselyte, too, from the Gentiles, whether Greek or Latin, is represented twice over, first behind the Apostle, as Moses in the wilderness, taking off his sandal, that is, preparing himself for initiation by *reverence*. For when Moses saw the burning bush, which was a type of the Incarnation, and was moved by natural curiosity to draw near, the voice of God, represented in the painting by a hand reaching from above, warned him that if he would approach unhurt he must first prepare himself by reverence, which in the East is still signified by taking off the shoe. The Christians therefore, transferring to the New Testament this history, as they did also that of Moses striking the rock, signified by this younger Moses painted in the act of taking off his *sandal*, that

whoever would approach as a proselyte to the mysteries of the incarnation, must not come in a spirit of curiosity, but must first prepare himself by reverence: else his soul would be only scorched instead of being benefitted and saved. Having then thus prepared himself, the proselyte runs up to the rock and catches in his joined hands, and for the first time in baptism, that living water for his own salvation which in the central painting A 1 the Apostles and the hierarchy catch in their hands for the benefit of the world. The difference in age and dress between Moses striking the rock and Moses taking off his sandal is of itself a hint that neither the one figure nor the other are the historical Moses. The difference, too, in dress between the proselyte preparing himself and the proselyte running up to catch the water may have a meaning, the former being perhaps a Latin the latter a Greek, hinting the double language and race of the Gentile population at Rome; while in many sculptures of the same subject the caps on the heads of those that catch the water show them to be proselytes from the Circumcision. And if any one observe that the proselyte who in this painting is catching the water is *not* barefoot, but has either never taken off his sandals, or has resumed them, the answer is easy, that the shoe to be taken off is not the bodily shoe of the foot, but the shoe of the heart: the indispensable preparation is that of *inward* reverence; and this being made, it matters nothing whether the proselyte has shoes on his bodily feet or no.

After the new birth by Baptism there is need of a corresponding food. So in the opposite lateral painting A 3, in allusion to the Eucharist, we see once more the Rock twice repeated as in the central painting A 1; and the two men; no longer now with beards and full robes

as teachers, but clad in a simple tunic, and youthful, as servants, bringing each of them, as if from the Rock, a basket of bread to a central figure which is Christ himself; and he touches the bread with the rod of his power (the same rod that he delegates to Moses and to Peter) to change it from natural to spiritual food. The Rock itself, though the Apostles seem to be coming and bringing the bread as if from it, has now no streams of water flowing down, since the grace which comes from it is in this painting represented under the form of bread. The baskets of bread in this picture, if we count them, are the *seven* baskets of the miracle in the Gospel with an *eighth* added, the sense of the eighth being this, that we are not to think of the literal historical miracle, nor of the mere multiplication, though miraculous, of ordinary bread, but of something spiritual beyond, that is, of the Eucharistic change of natural into divine food. The creation of all things in the natural order having been completed in seven days, the eighth day, the octave, is a repetition of the first, introducing the new and spiritual creation by the resurrection of Christ the true Light from the dead, answering to the production of the natural light on the first day in the old creation. This sense, which is alluded to and explained by the Fathers, we shall find frequently recurring in the paintings and sculptures of the Catacombs. So too the six waterpots of the miracle of Cana are seen repeatedly with a seventh added, to show that it is not the change of water into wine for the guests of any earthly marriage, but the change of natural wine (which is as water by comparison) into that wine which is spiritual and divine, and which is drunk at the marriage feast of the Lamb.

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II. COMPOSITION B.—*Of the Woman.*

THE central painting B 1 represents an arched tomb in the Cemetery of SS. Marcellinus and Peter, and is taken from vol. II. pl. cxxiii. of *Roma Sotterranea*; (the references are always to the edition published at Rome in three vols. fol. 1737—1754.) In the arch over the tomb one sees, to the right of the spectator, the fall of our first parents; the tree of knowledge with its fruit; the serpent coiled round the tree; on either side Adam and Eve already conscious of their shame; while to the woman is promised a son who in time shall bruise the head of the serpent. In the middle, at the top of the arch, instead of seeing the fulfilment of this hope, the world is drowned for sin by the Flood; and Noah in a box representing the Ark (a conventional form borrowed from a pagan medal struck at Apamea in Syria) receives a renewal of the original promise in the olive-leaf brought to him by the dove. On the left, answering to the Fall, we see Moses, here the historical Moses, striking the rock, which S. Paul explains to be a figure of Christ the Saviour to come, the son promised to the woman, the peace received in type by Noah. And in the midst of these three representations, upon the end wall over the tomb there are two men, one on either side, with one hand concealed in their robes, and the other arm and forefinger extended, pointing to a woman in the attitude of prayer.

In these two men (who are of very frequent recurrence, and on the Glasses are often accompanied by their names) we recognise, without doubt, the two Apostles Peter and Paul; and when we come to Composition D, we shall see that they stand not so much for the persons



of the two Apostles as for the whole Apostolate and hierarchy, and for the Church itself which they founded. Who then, one may ask, is that woman to whom the Apostles or the Church, or to whom any two men, not aliens from Christ, may be conceived to point our attention, in the midst of paintings alluding to the promise made and repeated from the beginning? Manifestly what they point to, must be the accomplishment of the promise, the Incarnation: and the central figure of the woman praying must be she to whom the promise was made, and in whom it is accomplished; that is, abstractedly, Eve in her daughters, human nature in its female aspect, the Church of the elect, the daughter of Sion, which, after ages of travail and expectancy, at length bears the promised seed, but literally and personally the blessed Virgin, who is the mother of the man-child Jesus Christ, and herself the first and most glorious member and most perfect type of the Church. The two senses are in reality but one; nor is any inscription needed to assure us of the sense of the paintings about this tomb, which are of themselves a Composition, and the parts of which explain one another.

In B 2, from the end wall over a tomb in the Cemetery of S. Cyriaca or Domnica, afterwards renamed from S. Lawrence, there is a painting copied by Bosio (see vol. II. pl. cxxx. of Rom. Sott.), but now no longer extant. In it we see again the same group of the woman in the attitude of prayer, with the two men, one on either side, who are the Apostles representing the Church; but now no longer in the same attitude of *pointing* our attention to the mother of the promised Saviour. Now they are coming under her extended and uplifted hands, with which she prays, and

joining together their own hands exactly as we have seen them with their hands joined together under the water flowing from the rock, as if to seek and receive the benefit of her prayers; and she, instead of holding the palms of her hands in the simple attitude of prayer, such as is seen in numberless other paintings and sculptures, that is, either horizontally or vertically, inclines them downwards a little, as if to let something run from them into the joined hands held below. It is a painting in fact equivalent in sense to those first words of the Church in the Litany, "*Sub tuum præsidium confugimus, sancta Dei Genetrix;*" and it could hardly have been misunderstood, as it has been, both by Bosio himself and by others who have followed him, had he not overlooked and neglected in the Cemetery of S. Callistus the central painting of Composition A, in which the two men hold their hands in precisely the same manner under the water flowing from the rock. So close, indeed, is the resemblance, that one may well think the two paintings, A 1 and B 2, to have been painted by the same person. On one side in each the two hands are held a little apart, as if in the act of joining, on the other they are already joined. It is true, indeed, that this same attitude of joining the hands to catch water occurs very frequently, as often as Moses or Peter is represented striking the rock, so that it ought to have been understood even without the help of the painting A 1, in the Cemetery of S. Callistus. But Bosio having missed, from whatever cause, the sense of the attitude, imagined this painting B 2 to represent some female Saint, perhaps S. Cyriaca herself from whom the Cemetery was named, in the act of prayer, while two men (whoever they were) were holding up her hands as Aaron and Hur held up the hands of Moses.

It is singular that he should have had recourse to an explanation so plainly erroneous, when that very attitude which he sought to discover here occurred plainly enough in another crypt in the same Cemetery of SS. Marcellinus and Peter, whence it is given in vol. II. pl. cxxvi. of Rom. Sott. It was the discovery that Bosio and others after him had fallen into this error that suggested to the author the idea of grouping together the three paintings B 1, B 2, and B 3, into a Composition, exhibiting the different *attitudes* in which the two men appear with the woman in prayer. And with regard to the sense of the attitude in B 2, if any one catches at the fact that Bosio (who was certainly in his time an honest and diligent explorer of the Cemeteries) did not identify the woman with the Blessed Virgin, nor the two men with the Apostles, it may be remarked that it matters nothing to the sense who they are, so long as the attitude of the hands be acknowledged. For suppose the central figure to be really S. Cyriaca, or any other Saint, and the two men to be only, as M. Perret calls them, "two venerable elders," if they or if any Christians seek the benefit of the prayers of S. Cyriaca or any other, then certainly in the same way and in a much higher degree do they and all other Christians seek the prayers of the Blessed Virgin, the mother of Christ; so that by implication and indirectly the Blessed Virgin would be contained in the painting even then, just as under Mary the sister of Martha, who chose the good part, the Church sees also Mary the mother of Jesus, and reads that Gospel as equally applicable to her. The original of B 2 being no longer extant, the colouring has been added by the artist from the analogy of other similar paintings.

In B 3 we have the attitude already alluded to with

which Bosio improperly identified that of B 2. The central figure of the woman in prayer has again the two men on either side of her, as in the two preceding paintings; but the men now have each one arm wrapped in the folds of their clothing, while with the other hand they hold up on either side the arms of the central figure at the elbows. The woman, therefore, here is really represented as answering to Moses; and the two men answer to Aaron and Hur, who held up the hands of Moses: and when once this is perceived, it is also plain to what persons of the New Testament the history is transferred.

The attitudes of B 2 and B 3 exhibit two sides of one and the same doctrine, and when they are combined, the one serves to correct certain misapprehensions which may be raised in the minds of Protestants by the other. For one bred up in Protestant ideas, on being shown the painting B 2, might object that this, in the sense attached to it, is even an exaggeration of Popery. If the two men are the Church, and the woman praying is the Virgin, to whom the Church prays, then she seems to be a separate mediatrix between God and man, individual souls, and even the Church, doing nothing for themselves, but seeking and obtaining all through her. The other painting, B 3, gives the explanation and correction. "Quite true," it enables us to reply, "her prayers are in a manner all-powerful and indispensable. They are in the New Testament what the prayers of Moses were in the Old. When she prays, Israel prevails; when she ceases to pray, Amalek prevails. But she cannot pray alone; she is not to be thought of as an independent mediatrix or goddess parallel with Christ, or even opposed to Christ. She needs Peter and Paul, that is, all the congregation of

the new Israel, whom they represent, to pray with her, to support her arms, and help her to pray. She is not to be disjoined even from the least or lowest of the members of Christ, but needs them all; that all together, and she only with all, and at the head of all, may prevail over the enemy in and through her Son."

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### III. COMPOSITION C. — *Of the Rod.*

THE Rod, signifying Divine power, appears in the hand of three persons, and three only, namely, Moses, Christ, and Peter: and these three are reducible to one, that is, to Christ. "The Lord," it is said in the Psalm, "shall send the rod of thy power out of Sion." The rod of Moses is the power of Christ, delegated to his servant; the rock struck by Moses is Christ himself; and what Moses did in the wilderness for the old Israel, Peter does for the New; so that in the Christian paintings and sculptures Moses striking the rock commonly represents Peter.

In C 1, at the top, *a* (Rom. Sott. vol. II. pl. lxvi. and compare pl. cxiii.), we see Christ with the rod in his hand touching the baskets of natural bread to change it to spiritual; for though no eighth basket is here added, the spiritual application of the miracle was of itself well known and familiar. This painting is from the Cemetery of SS. Nereus and Achilles.

On either side are the bottoms of two glass calices or pateræ, the upper parts of which, being brittle, have been broken away. Many such have been found in the Catacombs, often encrusted in the plaster at some tomb. They seem to have been made for the charitable dis-

tributions called *agapæ*, and besides other Christian representations, they often bear upon them allusions to this use. The representations are made by placing a leaf of gold cut in the form designed between two thin plates of glass, which were afterwards welded together. The manufacture seems to have been introduced at Rome during the second century, one glass showing a heap of coins with the effigy of Heliogabalus; and it is said that no fragments of any such glasses have been discovered elsewhere than in the Christian cemeteries. At the same time some of those that have been found certainly bear upon them representations (such as Hercules, Achilles, &c.) which suggest heathen rather than Christian associations, though perhaps hinting some Christian sense. That they were sometimes used also as chalices for the consecration or distribution of the Eucharist, has been supposed, but without any sufficient proof. Still less does it follow from the fact that the use of glass chalices in the Eucharist was forbidden at a certain date in the third century, because they were found to be too fragile, that therefore all the glasses found in the Catacombs (*none* of them with the form of Eucharistic chalices), are older than the date referred to. On the contrary, some of those found belong plainly to the fourth century. For the two used in this Composition the Author is indebted to P. Garucci, who has since published in one volume, with notes and explanations, a complete collection of all that have been found.

On the glass *b*, to our right,—(for all glasses the reader is referred to the collection recently published by P. Garucci,)—around the busts of a man and his wife, the givers of the *agape*, we have a series of five representations: first, there is the Fall, much as in the painting

B 1, already described, and the Lord stands by with the rod of power in his hand, judging our first parents and the serpent. Next follows the sacrifice of Abraham; hinting the atonement for sin. In this the rod does not appear, but a knife is held aloft in the hand of the sacrificer, who holds one hand on the head of Isaac, while the lamb to be substituted stands by. Probably Christ himself is intended by all the three figures, as being himself at once the Priest and the victim. Then we have the type of Moses with the rod striking the rock, Moses being the Christian hierarchy, unless, as is possible, Christ himself is here again intended, twice over, both by the rock and by him that strikes it. And after atonement has been made by sacrifice, we understand by the water flowing from the rock the graces of the sacraments, especially Baptism and the cup of the Eucharist. After these we see the paralytic carrying his bed, and Christ with the rod of power standing by, enabling him. The order in which this occurs reminds us that the restoration of strength followed upon a forgiveness of sins pronounced first, and justifies us in seeing here an allusion to that sacrament in which grace impaired by sin is restored by Absolution. Lastly, there is Lazarus swathed like a mummy, and Christ with the rod of power raising him from the dead; so that one cannot doubt that the five subjects are purposely grouped in order of sequence, so as to form a Composition. The words ΠΙΝΕΤΕΣ, "Drink" and "Live," or "Life to you," which are very frequent on these glasses, sometimes in Greek, sometimes in Latin letters, probably belong the first to the giver of the *agape*, the second to him that partakes of the distribution.

On the other glass *c*, to our left, we see around the bust of the giver of the *agape* a similar series of four re-

presentations. First (if we suppose them to be arranged in order of sequence like the five of the preceding glass), we must name Tobias taking the inwards of the fish to anoint the blind eyes of his father, in which there is an allusion to Baptism, the blind father being human nature of the old Adam blinded by sin, and the fish being Christ. Next in order we see Christ standing in the midst of the six water-pots, with the rod of power changing the water to wine; and a seventh waterpot is added for the same purpose for which we have already found an eighth basket of bread to be sometimes added to the seven, namely, to hint that we are not to think of the miracle wrought at Cana in Galilee, but of the change of the wine in the Eucharist and of a marriage feast altogether divine, which was then foreshadowed. After these allusions to the sacraments, the sufferings of the Christians from the persecutions of the heathens are symbolized by the three children of the Hebrews clad in caps and Eastern dresses, standing amid flames, while the form of a fourth, who is the "Son of God," stands by with the rod of power, preventing the flames from hurting them. And lastly, in allusion to the restoration by penance and absolution of those who had lapsed, we see again, as in the former glass, the paralytic whom Christ had first absolved, carrying his bed.

The small sculptures *d, e, f, g*, are from the rim of the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, one of the richest specimens of the style of the fourth century, found in the crypts of the Vatican, and now preserved in St. Peter's (Rom. Sott. 1737, vol. i. pl. xv.). They represent Christ four times over as a lamb. In *d*, the Lamb holds the rod in his paw and strikes the rock (where the reader may notice that Christ is at once both the rock and the striker of the rock), while another



lamb comes up and drinks. In *e*, Christ as a lamb touches with the rod the baskets of bread, the same thing that we have already seen him do in *a* as a man. In *f* the Lamb uses his own paw as a rod, laying it on the head of another lamb, and so giving the Holy Ghost in Confirmation; for a dove signifying the Holy Ghost is perched above, and rays of grace from its beak descend upon the head of the lamb which is being confirmed below. Lastly, in *g*, the Lamb holding the rod in his paw touches with it the head of Lazarus, who stands upright, swathed as a mummy, in a niche, to raise him from the dead.

In the sculpture *h*, which is also from a sarcophagus, probably of the fourth century, (Rom. Sott. III. cxcv.) Christ has already given the rod of power to Peter, for we see him holding it in his hand. The cock at his feet shows him to be Peter; and Christ, with three fingers extended, is saying to him, "Thou shalt deny me thrice," while Peter with one finger to his lips replies, "No, not once." So in this whole plate C 1 we have the rod in the hand of Christ, and the delegation of the same rod to Peter.

In the lateral groups, C 2 and C 3, we see the rod in the hands of Moses and of Peter. First in C 2, *a*, from a sarcophagus, probably of the fourth century, (see Rom. Sott. III. xciv.) there is Moses (a beardless Moses, hinting perhaps Christ to come) standing with the rod in his hand on the shore of the Red Sea; and the Hebrews are going forth safe with their wives and children on the one side, while the Egyptians with their chariots and horsemen are being drowned on the other. Opposite to this, in C 3 *b*, in a painting from the Cemetery of SS. Nereus and Achilles (Rom. Sott. vol. II. pl. lxxi.) Moses is seen with the rod in his hand striking the rock,

while behind the rock are the Virgin and Child, the latter, perhaps, (for the original painting has been damaged, so that it is uncertain,) holding a little rod in his hand. This is a visible embodiment of the words of S. Paul, in that place where, alluding to a Jewish fable that the rock struck by Moses had followed the people's wanderings, he says that they "drank of that *spiritual* rock which followed them," that is, which was to come after them, "and that rock was Christ." For the literal rock followed them not. In another similar painting Moses is striking the rock, and behind the rock Christ is touching the bread with the rod; and again, in a third variety, Moses is striking the rock, and behind the rock Christ is touching with the rod the head of Lazarus, to raise him from the dead.

In C 2, c, Peter with the rod in his hand is striking the rock, and a proselyte of Gentile origin (for else he would have a cap on his head) is catching the water in his joined hands, in allusion to Baptism. This is part of an engraving given in Rom. Sott. vol. II. lxxxiii. The colours have been added. The whole original painting (which was in the Cemetery of SS. Nereus and Achilles, but as the writer believes is no longer visible) was so much like a consolidation of Composition A, from three paintings into one, as to suggest the thought that they were both painted by one and the same hand. Opposite, in C 3 d, from a sarcophagus (Rom. Sott. vol. II. lxxxv.), Peter appears again with the rod in his hand, while two Jews (shown to be such by their caps), servants of Herod Agrippa, are seizing him to carry him to prison.

This representation occurs so frequently as of itself to suggest the thought, that something more must be meant by it than an allusion to the mere fact of the imprisonment and miraculous deliverance of the chief Apostle

at Jerusalem, a fact paralleled by the imprisonment and deliverance of S. Paul at Philippi, which yet is nowhere represented. And if we consider closely the history of the first opening of the kingdom of God to the Gentile world, we shall see that the position of the Italian volunteer cohort at Cæsarea, the appointment of Herod Agrippa, a Jew, by the Emperor Claudius on his accession to be king of Judæa, and its consequences, namely, that both Herod should take a side against the Christians, and that the Italians should evacuate Cæsarea, were designed preparations towards an end; while the imprisonment and deliverance of S. Peter, making it natural that he should leave Judæa just as his Italian converts also were returning to Italy, was the last of the series of preparations, the touch as it were of the spring which sent him from the heart and capital of the Hebrew to that of the Gentile world; to Rome, that is, where we find him soon after, according to the local Roman tradition, near the head of a street (*vicus Corneliorum*) named from the Cornelii, whose clients were extremely numerous, and in the house of a Roman senator, one of the heads of the same most noble family, to which Rome had been so largely indebted for the extension of her empire. Sometimes on the sculptured sarcophagi we find a consolidation of those two representations of S. Peter, which in this Composition are exhibited separately. He strikes the rock with the rod, and proselytes converted from among the Jews run up to drink, while others are laying hands upon him to take him to prison. The same gospel is life to those that receive it, while to others who persecute it is a savour of death unto death.

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IV. COMPOSITION D.—*Of the Two Apostles.*

IN the central painting, D 1, which was copied by permission for the writer from the Cemetery of SS. Nereus and Achilles—(it is given in Rom. Sott. vol. II. pl. liv.)—we see Christ seated in the midst as the teacher of the world, with a box containing the rolls of the Scriptures at his feet, and on either side of him six Apostles, of whom one only is seated while the other five stand. Thus it appears at once to the eye that all the twelve are represented by the two chief Apostles Peter and Paul, the distinct Apostolate of the Gentiles being here merged in that earlier Apostolate of the Circumcision which S. Paul says was committed to Peter. For the two courts of the spiritual temple, though in one sense distinct as the inner court of the Jews and the outer court of the Gentiles, are not separated; nor is their double Apostolate so separate as to be incapable of being represented as one. The outer court of the Gentiles is originally only an expansion of the inner; and it is opened to them first in Cornelius by Peter; and both Peter and the eleven continued afterwards to build up from the Gentiles, as well as from the Jews, the unity of one Catholic Church, while S. Paul in like manner, though the special Apostle of the Gentiles, laboured not for them alone, but also, and first in every place, for the Circumcision. And after his first imprisonment at Rome he wrote a general Epistle to the Hebrews. So the Church being one, and originating from the sanctuary itself and from the inner court, and SS. Peter and Paul being reckoned as the heads of the joint Apostolate and hierarchy of the whole

Church, one sometimes finds, as here, one of the twelve Apostles of the inner court omitted to make room for S. Paul, so that the number *twelve* may be preserved; as if the city of God, the New Jerusalem, even in its widest sense, had twelve gates, "which are the twelve Apostles of the Lamb." Sometimes, on the contrary, the twelve Apostles of the Circumcision, with S. Peter at their head, are all represented together with S. Paul, so as to show by the group of thirteen that there is a distinct Apostolate for the outer court of the Gentiles.

In D 2 there are the bottoms of three glasses, which, like all the rest used in these Compositions, have been engraved and described in the work of P. Garucci. The middle one, *a*, exhibits Christ in the air, that is, invisibly and from heaven, crowning with two crowns of martyrdom the two Apostles, Peter and Paul, who are seated as the joint founders and teachers of the Roman Church and of the world. To these three figures the names are added, "Christus," "Petrus," "Paulus," though some of the letters do not appear. Around these runs an inscription, "Semper vivas hilaris in pace Dei eum tuis," "May you ever live happy in the peace of God, with all belonging to you;" a good wish, seemingly, from him who drinks to the giver of the *agape*. (Baldetti, p. 514. 72, and Garucci, pl. xv.)

The glass *b*, to our right, shows S. Agnes with her hands uplifted in prayer, as if praying for the two Apostles Peter and Paul, who stand on either side, without being in the same attitude of prayer themselves. The names are inscribed over against each of the three figures, that of Agnes being colloquially corrupted into "Annes." But S. Agnes being a young girl who suffered martyrdom nearly a century and a half after the Apostles, it is plain that she cannot be thought of as interceding for them;

they, rather, as having been glorified "with Christ" long before, were praying for her, and for all her contemporaries, when she suffered. We may ask then, For whom does she really pray? and the Roman Christians reply, "For whom should she pray but for *us*, of whose Church she is so great an ornament?" So we learn that the two Apostles Peter and Paul (the founders of the Roman Church), are put as a symbol to represent the Roman Church, and through it the Church at large, which they founded. If the Greek word "ZESES," "Live," occurs here alone at the bottom of the glass, this is perhaps because the three other sides are occupied by the three names; but in other cases, as in C 1 b, it appears alone without any such reason. Sometimes the two words, in Greek and Latin, "PIE BIBE" and "ZESES VIVAS," occur together (see Garucci, pl. x. 8); and so the sense of "BIBATIS" is determined. The Greek word "PIE," too, occurs together with the Latin "VIVAS."

Having now learned, by the help of S. Agnes, that the two Apostles Peter and Paul stand not for the two men themselves, but for the Church which they founded, we shall not mistake, as we else might have mistaken, when we find in D 2, c, a female figure with the name "MARIA" praying for the same two Apostles, who stand again with their names inscribed as dwarfs under her extended hands. The diminutive stature of the Apostles has probably the same sense with their position, placing them visibly under the prayer and protection of the woman who prays. In like manner, in paintings of baptisms, the person baptized, though full grown, is represented sometimes with the stature of a boy; and the paralytic carrying his bed,—the blind man whose eyes Christ touches,—Lazarus whom Christ raises from the dead,—and the sister of Lazarus at Christ's feet,—are

often sculptured as pigmies on the sarcophagi. S. Mary, then, here is not represented as accompanied or attended upon by the Apostles, her contemporaries, nor as praying for them personally; but, like S. Agnes, S. Peregrina, and other saints on the glasses, she is praying for the Church which the two Apostles founded.

Having learned the use made of them as a symbol, we may return in thought to the paintings of Composition B, and reflect that there also the two men who point to the Incarnation, who seek the benefit of the prayers of the Blessed Virgin, who pray with her, and help or enable her to pray, are not so much the two Apostles personally, as the Church itself on earth which they founded.

On the opposite side, D 3, we have two more glasses, *d* and *e* (equally with the preceding given and described by P. Garucci), and a sculpture, *f*, from a sarcophagus. (Rom. Sott. vol. i. pl. xxi.) This last is inclosed in a ring merely for the sake of symmetry.

On the glass in the middle, *d*, (Garucci, pl. x.) a single crown of martyrdom unites the two heads of the Apostles Peter and Paul (the names being attached), to show that the two together are one joint foundation for the Roman and for the whole Church.

But lest any one should wrest the sense of this painting, and argue that, therefore, the two Apostles are in all respects equal and co-ordinate, so that the Church began from a dualism, and not from unity, a glass, *e*, is added on one side, with the figure of a man striking the rock, and the name "PETRVS" inscribed, showing plainly to all such as doubt, that the Christians transferred the story of Moses striking the rock from the Old Testament to the Gospel, and that for them Moses was Peter. But if Peter strikes the rock in the New Covenant as Moses

struck it in the Old, then it is clear that he represents the unity of the whole hierarchy, and communicates the grace of the Gospel to the whole of the spiritual Israel, S. Paul himself included. For when all were athirst in the wilderness, all the congregation, from the first to the last, and Aaron himself, however closely associated with his brother, depended on the rod of Moses. Wherefore, by analogy, there is no room in the new Israel any more than in the old for a dualism; but the rod of Moses in the hand of Peter is the single source of grace to the indivisible unity of the Catholic Church both of the circumcision and of the uncircumcision. The Glass *e* is preserved in the Vatican. It has been published by Boldetti, p. 200; and by P. Garucci, in his pl. x. 9.

Corresponding to this glass, on the opposite side of *d*, is a sculpture, *f*, which occurs repeatedly on sarcophagi of the fourth century. The present example is taken from Rom. Sott. vol. i. pl. xxi. The sarcophagus is from the crypt of the Vatican. Here we see Peter receiving from Christ the keys; and the same inference may be drawn from this that we have collected from the glass *e*. For Peter receives the keys and unlocks the door of grace to all the world, both Jews and Gentiles; and that authority which is given jointly and indifferently to all the Apostles, is given separately and primarily to him: nor can any real and permanent discord result from this double gift; since the grace of Christ and of the Holy Ghost, which is to be with the Apostles and the Church to the end, cannot be divided against itself. Whatever appearance, therefore, there may be; whether in point of numbers or antiquity, in favour of any *minority*, as if the Apostolic Church were divided, it must be disregarded by faith and by right



reason ; and the majority of the Apostolate or Episcopate, with Peter at its head, must be followed as having the promise of Christ.

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### V. COMPOSITION E.—*Of the Scriptures.*

IN the middle of the principal group, E 1, is a painting, *a*, copied from the roof of a crypt in the Cemetery of S. Agnes. The engraving of the same will be found in vol. III. pl. cxi. of *Roma Sotterranea*. This painting represents Christ seated between two boxes containing rolls, the Scriptures of the two Testaments, with his hand raised, in the attitude of teaching.

On one side of him, to our left, from a sarcophagus of the fourth century found in the crypts of the Vatican, and given by Bottari (*Rom. Sott.* vol. I. pl. xxvii.), we see Moses, *b*, receiving the written law of the Old Testament, which is held to him by a hand from a cloud over the mountain.

On the opposite side, to our right, from another sarcophagus found in the Cemetery of S. Lucina, *i. e.* near S. Paul's Basilica, there is Moses, *c*, seated, reading the Law, which is held before him by an attendant (shown to be an Israelite by the cap), in order to teach the people out of it afterwards.

In the lateral group E 2, in the centre, from another sarcophagus found at the Basilica of S. Paul, and given in *Rom. Sott.* vol. I. pl. xxii. from the Vatican Cemetery, one sees, *d*, Christ giving the new law of the Gospel as an open roll to his two Apostles, of whom S. Peter holds a closed roll as if in place of the rod, standing on the right hand of Christ, and S. Paul on the left receives the open roll of the Gospel, to preach the Cross of Christ among the Gentiles. Christ

himself stands on a small eminence, and is represented twice over, both as a man and as a lamb, with a cross rising from his forehead, standing beside the man, while four streams of the mystical Jordan, by some identified with the four Gospels, flow from the mount. On either side there is a palm-tree, and a turret and open door, from which are issuing other lambs. The whole representation is of very frequent occurrence in the fourth century, and later, on the sarcophagi; and in the mosaics around the apses or tribunes of the early Basilicas. In these the two turrets are often amplified into two cities, and have the names Jerusalem and Bethlehem added to them—Jerusalem to hint the Church of the Circumcision; Bethlehem, where the Magi found and worshipped Christ, to symbolise the Church of the Gentiles. What is remarkable in our present sculpture is this, that S. Paul seems to be associated with the *narrow* door of the Jews (unless there is any accidental inaccuracy), and S. Peter with the broader door of the Gentiles; whereas usually S. Paul, as the Apostle of the Gentiles, has Bethlehem and a broad door open behind him, and S. Peter, as the Apostle of the Circumcision, has Jerusalem with a narrow door behind him; and in some cases, as in a mosaic in the baptistery and tomb of S. Constantia, adjoining the church of S. Agnes, the narrow door behind S. Peter is *shut*, to show that the Jews as a body would not receive the Gospel. Some have thought that Christ in E 2, *d*, is giving the roll to Peter, the cross in his hand signifying his death, as foretold, by crucifixion, while it is S. Paul who is on the right hand of Christ, with the wider door behind him: but on two sarcophagi the Apostle to the right of Christ has the name "Peter," or the cock, S. Paul bearing the cross on the left, as here. (See P. Garucci, *Hagiogl.* p. 95.)

Opposite to this sculpture in E 3 is a painting, *e*, from the Cemetery of SS. Nereus and Achilles. (It is taken from Rom. Sott. vol. II. pl. lxi.) It exhibits the two Apostles seated, Christ being now no longer visible to either of them, with two boxes containing rolls of books placed on the ground between them. These indicate probably the Gospel as preached by Peter and the eleven to the circumcision, and the same Gospel separately revealed by Christ himself to Paul. They are conferring together, and S. Paul is communicating to S. Peter that Gospel which he has been preaching among the Gentiles. It is understood that Christ, who has sent them both, is invisibly with them both by his grace, and works mightily in them, both towards the circumcision, and towards the uncircumcision, by his Spirit. Nothing therefore is added to the sense, though we have added from a glass the figure of Christ in the air giving grace from his hands to the two Apostles, who appear also on the same glass. (See Garucci, Vetri, &c.) With this addition the group E 3, *e*, answers better to E 2, *d*, than it would have done if the space between the two seated Apostles had been left vacant, or if the figure of Daniel between the lions, which appears there in the original, had been retained. And there is no danger of confusion or misapprehension, as if the figure of Christ in the air belonged to the same painting with the two Apostles, since the colours alone distinguish the fresco-paintings, the gold being peculiar to glasses. The figure of Christ in the air reminds us of that attitude in which he was taken up "as he was in the act of blessing them," and of his promise to be with them, in teaching and baptizing all nations, even to the end of the world.

Lastly, at the four corners of E 2 and E 3, the figures *f*, *g*, *h*, *i*, are the four Evangelists, beginning

from S. Matthew, who points up to the star. These are from the facsimile of a painting in the Cemetery of Prætextatus, which has been placed in the Christian museum of the Lateran. In the original Christ is seated in the midst of the four, with a *book*, not a roll, open in his hands, and the open box (which should be the case for the same Scriptures) at his feet. The *book*, and the glory round the head of Christ, show the date of this painting to be later than the third, probably towards the end of the fourth century. Judging from the youthful appearance of the third figure among the Evangelists, one might suppose he was S. John rather than the fourth, but the order in which they are numbered is that of the original. In another representation of the same four Evangelists in an early Cemetery at Albano, each of the four figures, the upper parts of which have perished, has a round box, meant to contain the roll of his Gospel, standing on the ground at his feet.

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## VI. COMPOSITION F. — *Of the Eucharist.*

THE four parts, *a, b, c, d*, of the principal group, F 1, occur all together as a composition in the Cemetery of S. Callistus, and were copied thence by permission for the author; only, to suit the size of the paper, *a* and *d* have been transposed, *d* being in the original painting on the roof of the crypt, above *a*, which holds the central place on the wall below, with *b* adjoining it to the right of the spectator, and *c* to his left.

*a* is the Mystical Supper of the Eucharist. The seven figures seated at the table represent all the disciples of Christ. The number *seven*, signifying universality, re-

minds us of the *seven disciples* to whom Christ, after his resurrection, appeared on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and invited them to dine, giving them bread and broiled fish. (John xxi.) The *two fishes* on the table remind us of the multiplication of the five loaves and the *two fishes*. (Luke xi.) The seven baskets of whole cakes of bread, not fragments, ranged below, allude to the similar miracle, recorded by S. Mark, of the multiplication of *seven loaves*, after which they took up *seven baskets* full of fragments; while the addition here of an eighth basket hints, as has been already explained, that we are not to think of the literal history of any one of the three occurrences alluded to, but of that ulterior and spiritual sense to which they all point, and in which they all unite, that is, the doctrine of the Blessed Eucharist. This Mystical Supper being set forth in the midst, we see as accompaniments on either side of it:—

First, in *b*, to our right, the sacrifice of Abraham. Abraham and his son Isaac, clad each in a single tunic, are praying with hands uplifted to God; Isaac, and the lamb to be offered instead of him, which stands near, both signifying the Lamb of God, the Son of the Father, whose sacrifice is the propitiation for sin. The faggot of the wood for the burnt-offering is also seen.

In *c*, to our left, there stands a small tripod table, as an altar, and upon it two cakes of bread, one larger, the other smaller. On one side of this altar is a figure half-clothed in the *ἐξωμὶς*, an abstract Melchisedec, directing his hand as if to show a purpose of consecration towards the lesser cake of bread, which is partly broken, and shows in the midst of its dark substance something white, like a fish compressed. About the larger cake of bread, towards which the hand is not directed, which is not consecrated, there is nothing re-

markable. On the opposite side of the table (that is, in the place of the people, facing towards the consecrator), there is a female figure, that is, the Church, the Blessed Virgin, or any Christian, praying with uplifted hands before the oblation, believing, as says S. Cyril of Jerusalem, that those prayers are most prevailing which are made with the consecrated gifts lying in open view. If any one will only propose to himself as a problem the question, how to paint to the eye the power of consecration, he will appreciate the ingenuity and simplicity of this design.

The fourth painting, *d*, the proper place of which is on the roof above *a*, adds nothing to the sense already collected from the preceding three; but as it is found together with them in the original it is reproduced here. As placed immediately over *a*, the tripod table may indicate the *altar* of oblation as distinct from the *table* of the Eucharistic Supper; and the bread and fish laid upon it, one upon another, hint the truth, that in the Eucharist the bread and the fish (the fish being Christ) are one and the same thing. It is noticeable that on the supper table *a* the two fishes alone, which are Christ himself in his two natures, are the whole banquet, nothing else being placed on the table, though the bread, which is the same thing as the fish, stands by. On the tripod table or altar above, where there are three cakes of bread identified with one fish, there may be an allusion to the three Persons of the Trinity; or again, it may be hinted that the three distinct things, the bread the wine and the fish, are all one substance of the spiritual bread, and in number one and the same mystical fish, which is Christ.

This whole group of paintings occurring in a cemetery of the third century at Rome, should be compared with

a composition on the same subject worked two centuries later in mosaic, in the sanctuary of the church of S. Vitalis at Ravenna, and still in good preservation. There we see immediately above the altar, not only the sacrifice of Abraham and the oblation of the abstract Melchisedec, but in addition to these two a third, the sacrifice of Abel; so that there is a manifest and complete allusion to those words in the canon of the Mass, by which, after consecration, God is prayed to receive the Eucharistic oblation "as [He] did vouchsafe to receive the gifts of [His] righteous servant Abel, and the sacrifice of our forefather Abraham, and that offered to [Him by His] High-priest Melchisedec." So that this part of the text of the canon of the Mass, at any rate, was the same in the fifth and even in the third century as it is now.

In the lateral group, F 2, in the middle, *e*, from a sarcophagus at Arles, a drawing of which was communicated to the author by P. Garucci, (comp. Rom. Sott. i. pl. xix.), we see Christ himself with the rod of divine power twice over touching on one side the baskets of bread, on the other the water-pots, both in allusion to the bread and cup of the Eucharist, and to the change of natural into spiritual and heavenly food.

Adjoining this, two of them on either side, are four paintings *ff*, *g h*, which occur in a crypt in the Cemetery of S. Callistus in the same relative positions one to another as they hold here, except that the artist has inadvertently transposed *g* and *h*. In *ff* we see twice over a basket of bread, with a glass of red wine in the middle of it, placed upon the back of a fish, signifying that in the Eucharist the bread, the wine, and the fish, which latter is Christ, are all one and the same thing. Opposite to these paintings of the spiritual food, on either

side of the doorway by which one enters into the crypt, are two others, *g* and *h*, the one with a dove perched on a spray, the other with two lambs; both the dove and the lamb signifying the Christian soul, which is nourished by the spiritual food. Between the two lambs is an altar of turf, with a pail of milk set upon the top of it; milk and curd being another type of the Eucharist. Something of the same kind was probably painted on the other side also with the dove, one may suppose a bunch of grapes, either alone or in a vase, as one sees often in the same connexion; but the plaster has been broken away; and it did not suit the writer's plan to run the risk of adding anything from other sources, so as to improve a composition which presented itself ready made to his hand. If grapes were originally there, as he inclines to suppose, they would stand in the same relation to the dove as the milk to the lambs: both would correspond, as the liquid part or cup of the Eucharist, to the solid part represented opposite in the bread and the fish; and would soften and accommodate whatever was unsuited in these types, or even in wine, to those natures of doves and lambs which are made to stand for the souls to be fed.

In the opposite lateral group, *F* 3, the central part, *i*, is from a sarcophagus found in the crypts of the Vatican. (Rom. Sott. vol. i. pl. xxvii.; and xxix. is nearly the same.) Christ ascending to heaven as Elijah, leaves to his disciples, by the sign of his mantle, a double portion of his Spirit, to do the same things as they had seen him do, and even greater things: the same, for example, if we think of multiplying natural bread, or changing water into natural wine; greater, if we think of the change of the Eucharistic bread and cup, as compared with those figurative miracles. We see that



it is certainly Christ, and not Elijah, by the youthful beardless countenance, the long hair of the Nazarite, and the flowing robes. Consequently he leaves his mantle not to Elijah, but to his own disciple Peter: and we may recognise the same countenance in the adjoining sculpture *l*; for the two are from the same sarcophagus. This same subject occurs repeatedly on the sarcophagi of the fourth century, and is not unknown in the paintings of the Catacombs; a spirited example of it being still extant in the Cemetery of SS. Nereus and Achilles (Rom. Sott. vol. II. pl. lxxii.) : but besides that it has been damaged, it was spread out into too great a length to suit our Composition; so the sculpture was preferred; and it affords us an opportunity of pointing out an example of one of those slight changes in Christian art which came in in the fourth century. This is the river Jordan personified, with his urn, an image borrowed from heathen art, and not found in the earlier paintings.

Peter, having so received the power and Spirit of Christ for the priesthood, in another sculpture, *k*, strikes the rock: but the waters flowing from the rock represent all the graces given through the ministry of the clergy, and so consequently also the cup of the Eucharist, of which two Jews, known to be Jews by their caps, but now Christians, come up eagerly to drink. This sculpture is from a sarcophagus found in the crypts of the Vatican, and is given in Rom. Sott. vol. I. pl. xxxvi.; xxxii. also being nearly alike.

On the other side of *i*, in *l*, a sculpture taken from the same sarcophagus as *i*, there is a representation of the Christian Sacrifice, which for its clearness and completeness the writer believes to be unique. The sacrifice of Abraham, applied in a Christian sense and with

allusion to the Eucharist, occurs, as we have seen above, in the paintings of the Catacombs; and on the sculptured sarcophagi of the fourth century it becomes extremely common. In these sculptures sometimes Isaac only, sometimes only the lamb, sometimes both Isaac and the lamb, with or without an altar, are represented. But this is the only instance in which the writer has seen the two altars, of the old Abraham and of the New Testament, represented together. Here in the centre there stands the joint figure of Abraham and Peter, that is, the Apostle Peter in the character of Abraham, representing the Christian Priesthood. He stands between two altars, with the sacrificial knife up-lifted in his hand, turning round towards the voice of God represented by a hand stretched from heaven. One altar, from which his feet are turned away, is plainly the altar of the historical Abraham and of the Old Testament, being built of rude unhewn stones, such as the Hebrews were commanded to use. On it is the lamb sitting up like a rabbit, and a small bush, to which the lamb is sometimes attached by the horns. On the other side is a small altar of hewn stone or marble, such as the Greeks and Romans used, but the Hebrews never, with a human victim kneeling on its top, and on the two sides which are visible a small paten and a beaker, hinting the mola or sacrificial cake and the libation. Towards this altar the sacrificer would have been turned, but for the voice of God, which signifies at once that the old Abraham was not to sacrifice his son, but instead of him that lamb provided by God, which is a figure of the true Isaac and the true Lamb of God to come; and likewise that the priesthood of Peter in the New Testament is not to sacrifice literally a human victim, but instead of any such, and instead of the

heathen mola and libation, that cake of bread and that chalice which are mystically Christ.

The sarcophagus from which *i* and *l* are taken, is said to have stood in the time of Bosio in a garden near to the small church of S. Martha, behind S. Peter's; but so far are the Romans from always appreciating or preserving their own antiquities, that it has been broken up since the time of Bosio, and now only a part of it remains in the Villa Pinciana. It is given in Rom. Sott. vol. I. pl. xxvii.; and pl. xxix. has a representation *nearly the same*, except that the *altar* of the old Abraham is wanting.

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## VII. COMPOSITION G.—*Of the Sacraments.*

THE Christians of the first three centuries, as has been said already, did not paint their doctrines systematically for any purpose of instruction; and even if they had, no series of the seven Sacraments could have been painted by them, as the present mode of numbering and defining the seven Sacraments was introduced much later. Still, as the present technical language and doctrine of the Church on this subject is based on a true mutual relation between seven holy acts, which have ever been in the Church, for spiritual birth, strength, and food, for spiritual and bodily healing, and for natural and spiritual reproduction; and by these seven means of grace, as by "joints and bands," the body of the Church is perpetuated and increased, so that no one of the seven can be taken away, nor any eighth added, it is possible to discover and put together the mediæval group of the seven Sacraments even from the paintings of the

first three centuries; and nothing is really added or changed in sense by our doing so.

As the principal painting then, in G 1, there is exhibited an Ordination copied by Bosio from the Cemetery of S. Hermes, and given in vol. III. pl. clxxx. of *Roma Sotterranea*. It is put here in the principal place because it is by ordination that the Church obtains Clergy, and through the Clergy we have the ministration of all the other sacraments. A Bishop seated in a stone chair, raised by seven steps, is laying his right hand on the head of a Clerk, whom two Presbyters, one on either side, have been showing (as we collect from the expression of their eyes and hands) to the people. One may suppose a small portable table to be set as an altar before the Bishop, and beyond it the people to be standing, facing across it towards him. They have already answered that the candidate for ordination shown to them is "worthy," *Ἀξιός*, as they still reply in the Eastern Churches. The Candidate stands with his hands uplifted, praying that the grace of the Holy Ghost may come upon him as the Bishop touches his head; and the Bishop himself would probably have been stretching out his left hand in prayer, were it not for the open roll of the gospel, containing the mission of the Clergy even to the end of the world, which he is here made to hold in that hand. It is remarkable that this precise form of Ordination, which no longer exists either in the Latin or in the Greek, or in any of the Monophysite Rituals, is still preserved in that of the Nestorians, the most ancient of all separated Churches. In their Ordinal it is appointed that "here the Bishop Ordaining shall lay his right hand on the head of the Candidate" (as we see him doing in this painting), "and shall stretch forth his left in prayer," which he would probably be doing also, as has been

said, but for the open roll, which makes it awkward ; and the roll itself opening and extending forwards, may be taken as a substitute for the extension of the hand. The reader may notice that in this and other early paintings the Apostle, Bishop, Presbyter, and Teacher, are vested in a double robe, while the Clerk to be ordained, the servant, and the penitent, as inferiors, are clad for their outer garment in the single tunic only.

In G 2 and G 3 are arranged six other paintings, three on one side, *b, d, f*, and three on the other, *c, e, g*, for the other six sacraments; though two of them are rather equivalents than actual representations of the sacraments alluded to.

G 2 *b* is a Baptism from the Cemetery of S. Callistus, copied thence for the author. There is a fac-simile of the same in the Christian Museum of the Lateran. The figure of the person who is being baptized, standing in the water, is dwarfish in comparison with that of the baptizer, probably in order to hint that he is the disciple, and so the lesser; while the other, as teacher and initiator, is the greater. The baptizer holds his right hand on the head of the catechumen, to plunge him in the water (baptism in those early times being conferred, except in cases of necessity, by immersion), and in his left hand he holds the roll of the Gospel, containing the mission of the Apostles to "baptize all nations."

Opposite, in G 3 *c*, from the same Cemetery of S. Callistus, we have another Baptism, with only this difference, that the person baptized has been already plunged at least once, for the green lines near his head are water falling from him. This, and the fact that the Baptism G 2 *b* (which is preceded by Christ sitting as a fisherman), and also a painting representing the Eucharist, occur in the same crypt, have led some to think that the

imposition of the hand in this painting, G 3 c, denotes Confirmation, and that the original paintings of the crypt whence it is taken were designed to allude to Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, and Penance in order of sequence. Without denying that this may possibly be true, the writer observes, that though the green lines show that the person baptized has already been plunged, it by no means follows that he has been plunged for the third and last time; and it may have been desired to represent Baptism in the very act of being conferred. Confirmation no doubt was anciently joined with Baptism at Rome, as it is still among the Easterns; but the hand of the baptizer laid upon the head of the baptized, being in place until after the *three* immersions are completed, is no sign by itself of Confirmation, when the person baptized is still standing in the water, and there is no appearance of chrism, nor anything to show that the baptizer is a Bishop or Apostle. Confirmation we have certainly had already in Composition C, "Of the Rod," where Christ as a lamb was seen laying his paw on the head of another lamb, on which rays of grace descend from the beak of a dove seated above. And in the last of our Compositions, where there is a painting of the Baptism of Christ in a baptistery of the fourth century, in the Cemetery of S. Pontian, we see Christ standing in the water; the hand of the Baptist laid on his head to plunge him; and the Holy Ghost, in the form of a dove, with seven rays of grace issuing from its beak, descending from above. This unction of the Holy Ghost, given "not by measure" to the man Christ Jesus, the Head of the Church, being the same with the unction or chrism given to each one of his members by measure after their baptism, it was allowable, on the principle followed in these Compositions, to take the Dove from the Baptism

of Christ, and group it into a composition with any other painting of a Christian baptism; so long as the separate sources from which the two things were taken were distinguished to the mind and eye of the spectator. By such a composition nothing is added in sense beyond what actually occurs in the paintings of the Catacombs; while in respect of arrangement and colouring this course suited better than to insert for Confirmation a repetition of the sculpture already given in C 1 *f*. The circle inclosing the Dove has been added to show that it is taken from a separate painting.

In G 2 *d*, from the Cemetery of S. Priscilla, there is a painting copied by Bosio, and given in vol. III. pl. clviii. of Rom. Sott. The subject is Holy Communion, regarded probably as the support and strength and viaticum of the martyrs; for other paintings about the same tomb represent symbolically their sufferings. In the same way on the sculptured sarcophagi the hand of Habbacuc is seen offering bread to Daniel, who stands praying between the lions. Here there are seven figures, representing all the disciples of Christ, clad in a peculiar cape, as if for some special occasion, and kneeling, some of them with one hand raised to their mouths. At their knees on the ground are seven cakes of bread, one for each, reminding us of one of the two miraculous multiplications of bread; and two fishes, reminding us of the other similar miracle; while seven baskets are ranged below, filled, *not with fragments*, but with *whole* cakes of bread, the number seven being here preserved throughout, though there can be no doubt that neither the one nor the other of the two miracles, nor both of them together, are intended, but the Eucharist, to which they both separately and together pointed. The sense seems to be that after Christ in his two natures, the sole

or universal bread of life, has fed all his disciples, instead of being consumed or diminished, or divided into parts, the same food remains whole, and superabounds, so as to continue to feed the universe. But what is most important in this painting, though it might easily escape notice, is the attitude of kneeling, a posture not used at Rome in those early times in the act of receiving the Holy Communion, any more than it is at this day used among the orientals, who all receive standing. (Indeed, according to the Roman use, though the people kneel, the priest at the altar still receives standing.) So then in the painting before us there must be some special sense and intention in the posture of kneeling, as when a Greek or other eastern Christian makes an occasional and passing prostration; and if so, it will be difficult even to think of any other purpose than that of signifying the recognition and adoration of the Divine Food; of that bread which, being laid in the manger of Bethlehem, that is, of the Church, the "House of Bread," is adored both by the shepherds and the flock, which "no man eats," according to the words of S. Augustine, "but he first adores."

In G 3 e, from another tomb in the Cemetery of S. Hermes (Rom. Sott. vol. III. pl. clxxxvii.), we have three paintings, forming of themselves a composition relating to Penitence and Absolution, a subject of itself not likely to occur in the paintings of the Catacombs, but for a controversy which in the third century it occasioned. Certain heretics, at Rome and elsewhere, denying the propriety of restoring by penance and absolution such as had lapsed after baptism, the Church was more indulgent, and used the power which she believed herself to have received of remitting even the heaviest sins, granting penance even to such as in time of persecution had denied Christ, and restoring them to



communion. Thus it became natural to paint about the tomb of one who had been so restored the sacrament of Absolution, showing that in spite of the harsh doctrine of the heretics, he was in death a sharer in the hope and peace of the brethren, as having been reincorporated into the unity of Christ and his Church. A bishop or priest is seen here over the centre of the tomb, in the act of giving absolution by imposition of his right hand (as the orientals give it still) to a kneeling penitent, the same, no doubt, as was buried in the tomb below. The absolver has a double robe, the penitent is in the single tunic. On either side of this group, in two lesser compartments, and manifestly designed to serve as pendants to the same, there are two other paintings bearing upon the same subject; on one side, to our right, Jonas, escaped from the jaws of hell, is giving thanks on dry land, with his hands uplifted to God, for having been delivered by absolution from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. On the other side, to our left, the paralytic, whom Christ has absolved, saying, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," is seen walking and carrying his bed. Alone, these two paintings would probably have had a wider sense; Jonas would have been a sign of the resurrection, and the healing of the paralytic might have signified the general healing of human nature from the paralysis caused by original as well as actual sin. But here, grouped as they are with a painting of ecclesiastical absolution between them, they suggest a more limited application.

The Unction of the Sick, again, was not likely to occur, and the less as it was used chiefly in the first ages to obtain healing, by prayer and faith, from the bodily consequences of sin. So as a substitute for it we have taken one of the miracles of Christ which symbolises it

in its source ; and which, in a somewhat wider sense and application, occurs frequently on the sarcophagi of the fourth century. The sculpture which we have selected, G 2 *f*, is given in Rom. Sott. vol. i. pl. xxi. It represents the woman with the issue of blood, who after many years, having spent all she had on earthly physicians, and having been by them nothing benefited, but rather made worse, sought at last to Christ ; and coming behind him touched the hem of his garment, when the virtue of spiritual Unction went out from Him and healed her. The same may be applied to those who, after seeking in vain to earthly teachers as to physicians, turn at length to Christ ; and touching the hem of his garment, that is, his humanity and the unity of his Church, are so made whole of their plagues.

Lastly, on a glass, G 3 *g*, published by P. Garucci, (see also Rom. Sott. vol. III. pl. cxcviii. *bis*,) we have a representation of Marriage. A man and a woman, handsomely dressed, are holding their hands united over a small altar, above which are a ring and a crown ; while around are inscribed the words "*Vivatis in Deo*," "May ye live together in God ;" the good wish, no doubt, of them that drink from the glass, and partake of the *agape*, or charitable distribution, given on occasion of their wedding, by the pair. The altar, like that in Composition F 2, is borrowed from the heathen in form, and only indirectly hints that which answers to it in the Christian religion. The crown is still prescribed as part of the ceremony by the rituals of all the Eastern Churches, so that instead of marrying a couple, blessing a marriage, or being married, the expression is "to crown," and "to be crowned." And in the West the crown is still used in the metaphorical wedding of a nun. The ring needs no comment.

VIII. COMPOSITION H. — *Of the Martyrs.*

THE principal group, H 1, copied for the author from a tomb in the Cemetery of S. Agnes (Rom. Sott. vol. III. pl. cxxxiii.) is a composition in itself. It exhibits in the middle, Christ the Good Shepherd (the engraving also gives him pipes in his hand) with two sheep at his feet, between two lesser compartments containing symbolically the sufferings of the Martyrs. For on one side there is Daniel praying between the lions; and on the other the three children of the Hebrews are praying in the midst of the flames. Alone, the central figure of Christ would have been simply the Good Shepherd; and the two sheep at his feet would have been, generally, the flock of his elect: but when placed, as he is here, in the midst of the sufferings of the Martyrs, he appears as the shepherd and king of Martyrs, himself the chief of their army, who has drunk deeper than all of the cup of suffering, and is able both to strengthen and reward them that suffer; and the two sheep at his feet are the two Apostles as Martyrs, and in them all others.

The lateral paintings, H 2 and H 3, are from a tomb in the Cemetery of S. Priscilla, which is fully described by Bosio, but now is no longer extant. (Rom. Sott. vol. III. pl. clx.) It seems to have belonged to a soldier; and the wings of the angels seem to show that it is one of the latest of the tombs of the Martyrs. Besides the emblem of a heathen triumph, or victory in the Circus, painted within the arch on either side over the tomb, there are other representations in the same arch similarly borrowed from heathen imagery, as winged Pegasi; and others, again, as *tesserae*, which seem to be taken from

military life, and applied, like the triumph, in a Christian sense. On the end wall over the tomb, within the arch, in the centre, was a medallion containing the bust of the Martyr, naked, as that of an athlete; and on either side of this medallion, two men standing, with long scrolls unrolled and hanging down from their hands. At the top of the arch was a small figure of Tobias carrying the inward parts of the fish, and running, accompanied by his dog, to anoint the blind eyes of his father, as an emblem of the illumination of Baptism. Hence perhaps we may guess that the soldier here buried was hastily baptized, before he obtained the crown of martyrdom. What has been done in grouping our own Composition consists in this; first, that the emblem of a heathen triumph associated at the tomb we have described with one particular Martyr, has been placed in connexion with a painting which represents the sufferings of all the Martyrs generally; whereby nothing is added to the idea, which is already perfectly implied, when a triumph is ascribed to any single Martyr: secondly, the two triumphs which in the original painting, or at least in the engraving of Bosio, almost face the spectator, have been turned a little, so as to present a side rather than a front view; that the conquerors may be exhibited on either side going in triumph, with their palms and crowns, not towards the Capitol, but towards Christ, the King of Martyrs, on Mount Sion. Lastly, the colours have been added. As regards the winged angels which hold a second palm and crown over the Martyr above, these in the original are on the flat wall over the arch; and they are no unmeaning reduplication, seeing that the martyrs triumph not only on earth in the Church, which honours and invokes them, but also, and much more, in heaven.

IX. COMPOSITION I.—*Of the Virgins.*

THE principal group, I 1, like that of the sufferings of the Martyrs, H 1, is from a tomb in the Cemetery of S. Agnes, and was copied for the author on the spot; the central part, which has become effaced since the time of Bosio, being restored from his engraving (see Rom. Sott. vol. III. pl. cxlviii.). The whole, like H 1, forms a composition of itself, in the middle compartment of which we see the Blessed Virgin, as the Mother and Queen of Virgins, standing in the attitude of prayer, as praying for her daughters. A dove, the emblem of the Church (of which the Blessed Virgin herself is the most perfect type), and generally of the soul espoused to Christ, is at her feet. In one of the two lesser compartments to her left, that is, to the right of the spectator, we see the five prudent Virgins of the parable, with their torches (for torches, not lamps, were carried at Rome at weddings) burning, and in the other hand vessels of oil or grease, with which to feed them. They stand all together, waiting, ready to go in to the banquet. On the opposite side, to the right of the central figure, the same five, now admitted to the marriage feast of the great King, are seen seated at table, enjoying paradise.

It is interesting to compare this composition of the third century with another in mosaic, on the same subject, over the porch on the principal façade of the church of S. Maria in Trastevere, the first church ever dedicated by the name of the Blessed Virgin, indeed, the first ever built as a church at all at Rome. For before the date of its first erection (which was in the third century, the mosaics spoken of being many centuries later),

there were at Rome only house-churches (so we may call them), as the houses of Priscilla and Aquila, of Pudens, of Paul, and of Clement, and as the Cenacle on Mount Sion, at Jerusalem. In the mosaic composition alluded to one sees in the midst the Blessed Virgin seated on a throne, with our Saviour in her arms, both being crowned and clad in imperial robes. To their right, that is, to the left of the spectator, are the five prudent Virgins, as if approaching, in rich Byzantine dresses, with lighted lamps in one hand, and vessels of oil in the other, and upon their heads crowns. On the other side, to the left of the Blessed Virgin, are the five foolish Virgins—(this representation, it is to be remembered, is on the *outside* of the Church)—scarcely distinguishable, at first sight, from the five prudent ones; but on looking more attentively we perceive that the two foremost of them have no crowns, and that the lamps in the hands of these two are unlighted. Thus the precise sense of the Latin and Greek words in the parable is rendered, “for our lamps are going out,” “*extinguuntur*,” are in the act of going out. The first two having already gone out while the remaining three are still lighted, this implies that the latter also are on the point of going out. But to return to our own Composition :

In the lateral group I 2, in *a*, from the Cemetery of S. Priscilla, (Rom. Sott. vol. III. pl. clxxvi.), we see a painting of the Annunciation, the earliest probably which exists, if indeed it does still exist; for it is copied here only from Bosio, and the colours added. The fact that the angel is without wings is a sufficient sign that it is earlier than the fourth century.

In I 2 *b* is the Blessed Virgin, seated as a mother, with the Saviour in her arms. It is the same painting

which has been already given in Composition C 3 from the Cemetery of SS. Nereus and Achilles, where it occurs in connexion with Moses striking the rock. It may be doubted whether the rod held in C 3 in the hand of the infant Christ is really a rod in the original painting, or only a mark on the plaster which has been damaged; and though it appears in one publication, it is not seen or named in any edition of the works of Bosio. For this reason the rod is absent in the present Composition; though in Composition C, where it is so much in place, this consideration was allowed to weigh in favour of its admission. In point of *sense*, it is in that Composition all one whether it be visibly held in the hand of Christ or not, the rod in the hand of Moses striking the rock being confessedly the power of Christ to come, who in the glass C 1 *b* seems to take the place of Moses, and is himself at once the rock struck, the striker, and the rod.

The stone chairs which appear four times over in the lateral groups I 2 and I 3 are exactly the same with those which are still seen cut in the native tufa, and undetached from the side-walls of divers crypts in the Catacombs, especially in the Cemetery of S. Agnes. They belong undoubtedly to the third century.

The two paintings of the opposite lateral group, I 3, *c* and *d*, are from the Cemetery of S. Priscilla—(they are given in Rom. Sott. vol. III. pl. clxxviii). In *c* a Bishop, seated in one of the stone chairs just mentioned, is giving the veil, as it seems, to a Christian virgin (a Deacon also standing by); and he is pointing her attention to her pattern and patroness, and mother, the Blessed Virgin, who sits at some distance, with the infant Jesus in her arms, in another stone chair similar to that of the Bishop. She is sitting in an awkward

posture, half turned round, designed no doubt to make it apparent that she is turning round on purpose to give the virgin who receives the veil a look of encouragement and protection. This is the explanation which seems most probable, and for which the author can quote the opinion of P. Garucci, though it is to be observed at the same time, that in the original painting there is in the middle, between the stone chairs of the Bishop and the Blessed Virgin, another larger female figure, not seated, but standing with hands uplifted, and praying. The whole covers the end wall over an arched tomb; and there is something needing further illustration if the central standing figure is, as she probably is, the person who was buried below. Nothing is more frequent than to see in the centre of the front of a sarcophagus one or two busts of the person deceased, or of the pair, inclosed within, these busts being separated by a circle or medallion from the sacred representations sculptured on either side. But this is in the fourth and fifth centuries; while in the earlier paintings about arched tombs in the Catacombs it certainly is not common, to say the least, to see the person buried in the tomb occupying the centre of the end wall over it, especially when other persons of superior dignity are represented in the same painting. Perhaps the most probable solution is, that in this case the two side pictures, *c* and *d*, are introduced only for the sake of the central standing figure to whom they refer, she being herself the maiden to whom the Bishop is seen giving the veil, and the Virgin and Child opposite being there in connexion with the same event; while in the central and principal representation she is represented as having now happily accomplished that course of which *c* and *d* show the beginning. It is further noticeable that the Child in the



arms of the Blessed Virgin is naked, a variety which becomes common in modern times, but is very rare in the early paintings.

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### X. COMPOSITION K.—*Of Susannah.*

IN K 1 and K 2 we see two paintings which occur on the walls of a crypt in the Cemetery of SS. Thraso and Saturninus. The figures in this instance are copied at second-hand from the magnificent but untrustworthy work of M. Perret, with some assistance from notes made on the spot. The crypt shows signs of having been cut not earlier than at the beginning of the fourth century, or at the end of the third; and were it not that the martyr Susannah, the niece of Pope Caius, is related to have been buried in the Cemetery of S. Priscilla, a little nearer to the walls, one might have been tempted to suppose, from the paintings of this crypt, that it contained her tomb. The same subject, naturally suggested by her name, is still painted on the walls of her church near the Baths of Diocletian; and though the present church is comparatively modern, its paintings may probably have been derived from those of the church originally founded on the same spot.

Representations of the story of Susannah applied in a Christian sense are not so frequent as many others; they occur however both in paintings and sculptures, as is shown in this Composition, and also in a compendious form on some glasses, which have been illustrated by P. Garucci: and in the writings of the Fathers the sense in which the story was applied by them and by the Christians, their contemporaries, is in many places alluded to or explained at length.

In K 1 the central draped figure is Susannah, not the literal Susannah of the story, but the Church, which with hands uplifted prays to God to vindicate her innocence. On one side of her, to the left of the spectator, are two men, not the literal elders, for they are youthful in appearance, but elders as belonging to the two elder dispensations of the Jews and the Gentiles. These two then, with arms extended, have been crying out and accusing her. The tree, which in the original painting stands a little behind them, and which was omitted by M. Perret, has been restored. On the opposite side, to the left of the spectator, there is a house door opening into the garden, and a man, the Emperor that is, or the Prefect, or any other in authority, coming out in an attitude of enquiry, as if asking, What is all this outcry that I hear? and what accusation bring ye against her?

In K 2, which forms the suite to the above, the two men, that is, the old Jew and the old Gentile, appear again with their hands placed on the head of Susannah, the Church, giving their testimony against her to put her to death, while she again prays, but now only mentally, (for they keep down her hands,) to God, who alone is able to deliver her. The two trees, which are added for the sake of symmetry, are not in the original painting.

In K 3, from a sarcophagus of the fourth century seen in 1849 at Arles by the writer, who is now indebted for a copy of it to the kindness of P. Garucci, we see a variety of the same subject, the Church being again represented as Susannah holding the scroll of the Scriptures, as the shield of her innocence, across her breast, while the Jew and the Gentile of the elder dispensations, now both old and hard-featured, are spying at her from behind two trees, as seeking accusation against her, and

finding it, as is written of Daniel, only concerning the law of her God. On an ivory Reliquary at Brescia, an account of which has been published, there is a full and elaborate representation of the same subject.

Under Susannah, in the central painting K 1, there is added a small painting from the Cemetery of Prætextatus, now copied for the Lateran Museum, in which a lamb stands in the midst, with two hyænas or jackals with open mouth gaping at her on either side. Over the lamb is inscribed the name "SUSANNA," and over one of the two hyænas, "SENIORES."

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## XI. COMPOSITION L. — *Of Nebuchadnezzar and Herod.*

THE purpose of this Composition is to exhibit the two ways in which kings and emperors too commonly war upon the Church, either by open tyranny or by hypocrisy, while the true Christians prefer to obey God rather than man.

In L 1 the central figure of Nebuchadnezzar, in the dress of a Roman emperor, with one of his guards standing by, is taken from a sarcophagus, probably of the fourth century, given in Rom. Sott. vol. i. pl. xxi., but with some alteration. In the original it is a side view; the king being turned towards the image, and looking on beyond it to where the three children of the Hebrews are seen in the furnace. Here Nebuchadnezzar is turned round, so as to face the spectator; and further colours have been added; so as to show in this one instance what extent of liberty the plan of our work of itself admits, so long as notice is given to the reader,

To our right are the three children of the Hebrews standing before the golden image of the king, to which an officer is pointing, and commanding them to worship. This painting is from the Cemetery of SS. Nereus and Achilles (Rom. Sott. vol. II. pl. lxxxii.), where, however, one of the three Hebrews appears as a guard. If this is not an inaccuracy in the engraving, our painting has been altered so as to agree with other examples of the same subject. To our left, from a painting in the Cemetery of S. Hermes (Rom. Sott. vol. III. pl. clxxxvi.), are the same three children of the Hebrews in the furnace, praying to God, who is able to deliver them.

In the lateral painting, L 2, which is from the Cemetery of S. Agnes, and copied from thence for the author—(It is also given in the great French publication of M. Perret,)—we no longer see the open violence of secular tyranny, claiming to itself that obedience and devotion which is due to Christ and his Church. In its stead we see, under the person of Herod, the hypocrisy of such secular rulers as profess themselves to be good Christians, defenders of the faith, or eldest sons of the Church, when in truth the thought of their heart is to destroy Christ in his cradle, as a rival to their own power; that is, to subjugate his Church, and make it the instrument of their own policy. Herod holds his hand to his breast, and sits with a look of reverential inquiry. The Magi, with their gifts in their hands, and the star above their heads to show who they are, stand before him in an attitude of respect, not knowing the wickedness of his heart.

Opposite, in L 3, in a painting which is from the same Cemetery of S. Agnes, but from another tomb (Comp. Rom. Sott. vol. II. pl. lxxxii., Cem. of SS. Nereus and Achilles; and vol. II. pl. cxxvi., Cem. of SS. Marcel-

linus and Peter), we see the three Magi with their gifts coming to worship Christ in the arms of his mother. At the tomb referred to, in the Cemetery of SS. Nereus and Achilles, there is an interesting peculiarity of design, combining the two subjects grouped together in this Composition: the three children of the Hebrews are there seemingly identified with the three Magi, their features and dresses, and the colours of their dresses, being alike; and while on one side of the arch over the tomb they are seen refusing to worship the ugly image of the earthly tyrant, who can only threaten to kill the body, on the other they are running to worship the "Image of the Father," the heir of the throne of David, the true King of heaven and earth, in the arms of his Virgin mother.

There is yet another variety of the adoration of the Magi, which should be of interest to the Americans, since in the middle ages it became common to think that their conventional number three had some reference to the three continents of Europe, Asia and Africa, with their Gentile inhabitants, so that one of the three was often represented black. In the Cemetery of SS. Nereus and Achilles in one place, in a gallery, instead of three, the usual number, there are *four* Magi, so that a modern interpreter might infer that America was here represented by anticipation.

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XII. COMPOSITION M. — *Of the Ships.*

THE design of the central painting, M 1, is taken from an onyx seal described by P. Garucci, the proportions being enlarged, and the colouring added. It is given also in Rom. Sott. vol. II. p. 156. The vessel is the ship of the Church. The fish, on the back of which the vessel is carried, is Christ. The same idea occurs in connexion with the individual soul, which is represented on seals as a dove or as a lamb with a branch of olive or of palm, standing on the back of a fish, which carries it as a bark through the waves of this life. The steersman in the ship is also Christ. The dove on the poop is the Holy Spirit, whose breath is to fill the sail. The sail at that early period of the Church is only beginning to come down and to fill. The dove aloft represents the Prophets and Apostles on "the look-out." The two figures in the fore-part of the ship are the Apostles Peter and Paul as fishermen. Separately on the water we see Christ giving his hand to Peter to support him, and the names "Peter" and "Jesus" in Greek are added.

Of the four medallions around, *a*, *b*, and *c*, have been published by P. Garucci, in his "*Hagioglypta*," printed at Paris, A. D. 1856. (See for *a*, p. 237, for *b*, p. 7, for *c*, p. 237.) These three all represent the ship of the Church, and all show Christ seated as steersman, *a* being the same as has been just described, only smaller; and still, even so, it is magnified beyond the size of the original, which has the name ΙΗΣΟΥΣ on the reverse. The next, *b*, has in the fore-part S. Peter drawing in the net with a great fish enclosed. The third, *c*, shows the

twelve Apostles seated as the rowers, six of them on either side. The fourth and last, *d*, represents the bark of the individual soul, with its sail set and well filled, shooting into port; while a Pharos on one side shows the way, and secures it from running on the rocks or missing the entrance. A number of varieties of this same design have been collected by P. Garucci, to whose kindness the author is indebted for the specimen here inserted. (See also Boldetti, Osserv. &c. pp. 372, 373).

In the lateral paintings M 2 and M 3, both copied for the author from the Cemetery of S. Callistus, we see a very different ship, — the ship of the world. In M 2 the mariners are casting out Jonas, that is, the Christian, into the open jaws of the monster. Jonas, however, is not destroyed by what he suffers, but comes out again by the resurrection; and the corner of land on which he is about to alight is Paradise, to which come the children of the resurrection.

In M 3 we have again the ship of the world, which now, instead of persecuting others, is itself being wrecked and submerged by the waves. The children of this world are seen drowning without hope in the waters, while a hand reached from above, that is, the Almighty mercy of God, catches, as it were, by the hair of the head the elect, who trust in Him and pray to Him, and saves them that they should not perish with the world.

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### XIII. COMPOSITION N. — *Of the Sign of the Prophet Jonas.*

HAVING been put forward so emphatically by Christ as a sign, both of his own, and through his own of the general resurrection, the history of Jonas is of very frequent occurrence, both in the early paintings and glasses and on the sculptured sarcophagi. And as it consists of several parts, each suggestive of a Christian application, it is naturally and of itself a composition, whether represented compendiously, as it sometimes is, or at full. This only is to be noticed, that the order of the parts in their Christian application is not the same as in the original history. In the original history Jonas was first cast out of the ship and swallowed by the sea-monster: then he was vomited out on dry land; after this he was refreshed by the shade of the gourd; and lastly he was scorched by the sun, and admonished against his selfish impatience. But according to the application made of these passages in the paintings and sculptures of the Catacombs, the Christian is first scorched by the fire of persecution; and refreshed, it may be, by a temporary intermission: at length he is cast out of the ship by martyrdom: then his soul rests under the gourd in Paradise: and lastly, he comes out of the jaws of the monster by the resurrection.

The principal group of the present Composition, N 1, is from a tomb in the Cemetery of S. Priscilla (Rom. Sott. vol. III. pl. clxxvii.), and has here been selected in preference to other similar groups for the sake of this peculiarity, that it contains at top a painting of Christ raising Lazarus from the dead; another sign of



the general resurrection, reduplicating and interpreting that of Jonas issuing from the jaws of the monster. For below we see in order first, to our right, the ship whence Jonas is being cast out; next, in the middle, a latticed arbour, thickly covered by the leaves of the gourd, with Jonas under it, signifying the refreshment of the souls of the just in Paradise. It is remarkable that, though death is so often and so naturally spoken of as sleep, Jonas is scarcely ever so represented under the gourd that he can be supposed to be asleep: he is almost always "refrigerans," refreshing himself, or enjoying the refreshment, as one may translate the Latin expression. Lastly, in the corner to our left, we see him issuing from the monster's jaws for the resurrection. As regards the form of the monster, it was borrowed by the Christians from the heathen house-painters of Rome; and one sees exactly the same, with other fanciful decorations, in their paintings and mouldings; as, for instance, in the two tombs recently discovered on the Via Latina. The idea is that of a sea-dragon; as hell and death are represented by the form of a dragon, with open jaws, from early ages downwards: and in the hymns of the Greek ritual the fish of Jonas is called *Θῆρ, ἐνάλιος Θῆρ*, the wild beast or monster, the sea-monster. Of any form at all resembling that of a whale there is no trace.

Of the lateral paintings, N 2, which has been selected for its peculiarity, and represents the Christian as Jonas under the scorching heat of persecution, is taken from Rom. Sott. vol. II. pl. xv. It is from the Cemetery of SS. Nereus and Achilles.

The opposite painting, N 3, which is from the same Cemetery of SS. Nereus and Achilles, and from the same tomb (but in fact it is identical in many places), may be taken here to represent some temporary refreshment

by an intermission of persecution, the leaves of the gourd on the conventional trellised arbour being only thinly scattered, and very different from the thick foliage of the arbour in N 1, placed there between death and the resurrection.

In general, when Jonas is represented twice over, as he is very often, once as refreshed under the gourd, and once with the gourd withered, these two representations are made to match, and are set one over against the other; the arbour being the same, and the difference in the gourd itself being very slight; its foliage, while still flourishing, being scanty, and when withering being almost the same. Neither is the sun to be seen. Whatever causes may have led to this type, the consequence is, that the paintings of these two subjects, in point of expressiveness, often seem rather defective; more so than the sculptures, where the eye acquiesces readily in a gourd that is merely conventional. But in some instances, as in N 2 of our present Composition and its fellow painting, the full contrast of the two states of Jonas is exhibited. We see the sun darting down upon him fiery rays, while the gourd is completely withered, only the dry stem perhaps, which once curved over his head, or the stem in the ground, remaining. In two points the picture before us is unique, and by its very peculiarity is more expressive of the Christian application designed. The recumbent figure which we have in it, bearded and clothed, hints of itself the Roman Christian as living in the world, while a naked figure under the gourd suggests rather the idea of the soul despoiled of its bodily clothing, and of the body in a state for burial. And in the Christian order of events the fire of persecution comes first, of itself, not through the withering of any preceding refreshment. So, strictly speaking,

the gourd has no place ; and in this painting it does not appear. Afterwards, on some remission of persecution, the Christians, like Jonas, may be refreshed ; and again, when the persecution is renewed, and the gourd which solaced them is burnt up, they may be tempted with Jonas to be impatient, and to cry out, " O Lord, how long dost thou not avenge us ? How long dost thou bear with this cruel and idolatrous city, drunk with the blood of thy saints ? " But they reply to their own natural impatience in these their paintings from the story of Jonah, reflecting that God has patience with this great city not without reason, and that they also themselves have reason to be patient, that the example of their faith and patience may concur with the long-suffering of God to bring many souls like those of the Ninevites to repentance.

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#### XIV. COMPOSITION O.—*Of Baptism and Burial.*

THESE are the subjects of the two lateral groups O 1 and O 2, in each of which a variety of small representations are arranged symmetrically, while the principal painting O 3, which should be seen in the centre, if the size of the paper admitted it, above the other two, is a representation of the Virgin and Child, copied from a tomb in the Cemetery of S. Agnes, and selected here to close the Collection.

The painting in the centre of O 1, between the trees, is from a Baptistry in the Cemetery of S. Pontian (given in vol. i. pl. cxliv. of Rom. Sott.), not far from the spot where was once the Cemetery or Catacomb of the Jews of the Transtevere, the source and pattern of all the under-

ground cemeteries of the Christians. The crypt in which this Baptistery occurs, for it is still perfect, is known to have been made in the fourth century for the reception of the relics of two noble Persians, Abdon and Sennen, who had been martyred in the last persecution. We descend by steps to the water, which is still clear and abundant, and see opposite, painted on the wall, as if rising from the water, a flowered and jewelled cross, with the two lights of the two natures of Christ standing on its arms above, and the letters A and Ω, the Beginning and the End, suspended from them below. Above the arch on the outer wall is a fresco painting of the Baptism of Christ, who stands in the midst of the Jordan, John the Baptist, from the bank to our right, holding one hand on the head of the Saviour to plunge him, while the Holy Ghost is descending upon him as a dove, with seven rays from its beak; and on the opposite bank, to our left, an angel holds a tablet bearing inscribed the baptismal name of Him who is being baptized. This Name, it is easy to see from the remains of the square letters, was the Hebrew name of God. The aureoles round the heads of all the three figures, and the wings of the angel, would have enabled us to refer this painting to the fourth century, even if we had not already other testimony to the same effect. There is yet another particular to be noticed, viz. a hart, representing the human soul, coming up to drink of the waters now sanctified by the Baptism of Christ to the washing away of sins. In this we see plainly an allusion to that verse of the Psalm, "*Like as the hart desireth the waterbrooks, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God!*" We may notice also in this same painting an allusion to the Arian controversy; the Catholics seeing both in the Baptism of Christ himself, and in the formula of Baptism prescribed

by him in one "Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," an argument for the consubstantiality of the Son.

On the wall to the left of the spectator, in the same crypt, is a painting of Christ crowning with two crowns of martyrdom the two Persian martyrs Abdon and Sennen, from whom the Catacomb itself in later times has come to be named. But as this was foreign to our purpose, we have inclosed the Baptistry between palm-trees and olives, one of each on either side, copied from other sources, to represent the soul planted as a tree by the water-side in baptism; the palm having a promise of victory, the olive of grace and good works. The lamb and the dove which are added are equally symbols of the soul, which becomes a lamb by union with the Lamb of God, and a dove by the influence of the Divine Dove, which is the Holy Ghost. The Phœnix, which is seen perched on the palm, is a bird borrowed by the Christians from heathen fable, to be an emblem of the resurrection. (Rom. Sott. vol. i. pl. xxxviii.)

On either side of the centre already described are five circles, arranged in the form of a cross. In the topmost circle to our left, from a glass, is the Divine Lamb standing on the mount, with the four streams of the mystical Jordan issuing from it; while other lambs are coming forth towards it, to our left from Jerusalem, and to our right from Bethlehem. (Boldetti, p. 200.) In the topmost circle to our right, corresponding to this, is the Divine Dove with the seven rays of grace issuing from its beak, taken from the painting of the Baptism of Christ.

In the central circle to our left, from a painting in the Cemetery of S. Callistus (and there accompanying the two Baptisms already described above in Composition G), we see Christ as a fisherman drawing with a line a

fish, which is the human soul, from the waters of its natural state, to live a new life as in a new element. On the opposite side, in the corresponding circle, from a glass engraved and described in the work of P. Garucci, Tobias is taking the inwards from the fish, the fish here being Christ, to anoint the blind eyes of his father, that is, the blindness of the old Adam; wherefore Baptism is called illumination. (Boldetti, Osserv. &c. p. 197.)

The sense of the fish as a symbol may need a little further explanation. Apart from the use of the Greek word ΙΧΘΥΣ, meaning fish, as an anagram (for it is spelt with the first letters of Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, Θεοῦ Υἱός, Σωτήρ, which are, Jesus Christ, Son of God, and Saviour), the fish was viewed as a symbol of the human soul in the first or natural creation, of the same soul as regenerate or created anew, and of Christ himself as uniting the two creations of nature and grace. In the first or natural creation life began in the waters and from the waters, of which the fish is the inhabitant. In the spiritual or new creation, also, all life begins from the waters of Baptism. Both orders are united in Christ, who has truly taken upon him our nature of the first Adam, and truly quickens us, as the second Adam, through his divine nature, to become sons of God. Christ therefore is the "great Fish," with the virtue of whose inward and secret nature our blindness is anointed and enlightened, and in whom we become little fishes in the pool of Baptism, in like manner as we become doves also and lambs.

On either side of Christ as the fisherman, to our left, in the two circles forming the arms of the Cross, are two doves, *vis à vis* to one another, one with a bunch of grapes, in allusion to the Eucharist, the food of the soul after baptism; the other, with a crown or

wreath, for which, if we were allowing ourselves in any degree to create as well as to arrange, we should be inclined to substitute a cake of bread, the sense of which is no doubt contained by the grapes. These two doves, with their grapes and crown scratched in minium, are from a slab which once closed a niche in the Catacombs, and which is now incrustured in the wall of the Gallery of Inscriptions at the Vatican.

On the opposite side, in the two corresponding circles, from two seals in the possession of the writer, we see the soul represented as a lamb and as a dove standing on the back of a fish, the fish being Christ, which carries it as a bark through the waves and storms of the world. The olive-branch, which is added in the beak of the dove, is an emblem of the peace promised to Noah, but actually given to the Christian soul in baptism.

In the circle forming the bottom of the cross to our left, from a glass given by P. Garucci, we have the monogram of Christ, with the letters A and Ω, "the Beginning and the End," on either side. And in the corresponding circle to our right, from a slab closing a tomb, there is an anchor scratched in minium, an emblem which is very common, signifying the sure hope of the soul anchored to Christ. (Boldetti, Oss. p. 194, and p. 339.)

In the corner twice over is a terra cotta lamp, from one given by Boldetti (Oss. A.D. 1720, p. 63), with a human figure making the handle. This is meant to signify the lamp of the soul, lit in baptism, which the prudent Virgins, by prayer and watchfulness, keep burning through the darkness of this life.

We pass now to the end of the Christian course, and to the lateral Composition O 2, the details grouped in which relate to death and burial. The central part,

corresponding to the Baptistery in O 1, exhibits a portion of one side of a gallery in the Catacombs, showing how the ordinary niches appear ranged one above another. Most of them have been broken open by the barbarians in the fifth century, and it is only here and there that one now sees either a tomb still closed, or any portion even of bones in the open niches. The three niches here given, though copied from Boldetti (Oss. p. 213), have received some additions, so as to show more at once to the eye than is to be found at any three contiguous tombs. The length of the inscription on the lowest of the three, the form of the letters, and especially the monogram, show it to be at least as late as the time of Constantine. The emblem of the dove with the olive-branch in its beak is here a reduplication, as it were, of the words "IN PACE," alone, or merely with the name, often forming the whole of the earliest inscriptions. The palm below is no necessary sign of martyrdom, as is clear from the inscription in this case, and from the monogram; since every Christian who falls asleep in Christ is a conqueror. The remaining emblems of the anchor and the fish are equivalent to the words "*Spes in Christo*." The *loculus* in the middle has been closed with three tiles (the commonest method), one of which still remains; the other two have been broken away, so as to show the skeleton still perfect (a thing very rare in fact) in its place. The uppermost tomb is still perfectly closed, and has all the three tiles in their places. Here at one end may be seen a small glass ampulla incrusting in the plaster, held to be alone the only certain sign of the tomb of a martyr; though, of course, it is not probable that of three niches really occurring thus one should be much earlier than another. There is also a small lamp inserted into a



hole made for it at this tomb; and some visitor in the fourth or fifth century, we may presume, has scratched upon the plaster the words "PETE PRO NOBIS," Pray to God for us; the like to which is found occasionally both in Greek and in Latin.

Above the three tombs, from Rom. Sott. vol. III. pl. clxiv. is placed a painting of Christ with the rod of Divine power touching Lazarus, to symbolize the general resurrection.

On either side, inclosing this central part, are a palm-tree and an olive, as in the corresponding painting, but now at the end with their fruit added. The dove is perched on the olive as before; the lamb rests in peace under the olive of peace; and the phoenix, the "palm-bird," sits as before in the palm, as an emblem of the resurrection.

The top and bottom circles of the cross, on either side, exhibit the dove and the lamb standing on the fish, as in the Composition for Baptism; but now at the end twice over, not only with the olive-branch of peace, as given at the beginning in baptism, but also with the palm of victory, added now at the end. Of these, the lamb with the palm, and the dove both with the palm and with the olive, standing on the fish, occur on seals in the possession of the writer: the lamb with the olive added here, and in O 1, for the sake of symmetry, is a variation which may probably exist, but has nowhere been seen by the writer.

In the central circle to our right is Jonas resting under his gourd, signifying the refreshment of the soul in Paradise; and to our left, in the corresponding circle, he is issuing from the jaws of the sea-monster for the resurrection. (See Rom. Sott. vol. III. p. 79, and compare pl. lvi. vol. II.)

In the two circles forming the arms of the cross, to our

left, are the two doves scratched in minium, with the bunch of grapes and the crown, as in the group for Baptism : only there the grapes signified the Eucharist as the food of the regenerate soul in life ; here they signify the same Eucharist as the viaticum of the dying, and the pledge of resurrection. In the two corresponding circles on our right, we have on the one side the monogram of Christ, encircled by a crown (this is from a glass, Boldetti, p. 82) ; on the other, from two seals, the originals of which were in the possession of the author in 1856, an anchor inclosing two fishes : one of these is going downwards to the depth by death, the other is rising upwards to the surface for the resurrection.

In one of the two corners is set a glass with the blood of a martyr, with some of the plaster in which it was incrustated still adhering ; and on the plaster is scratched a palm, and an abbreviation of the word *Sanguis*, "Blood." (This is copied from Rom. Sott. ed. of 1651, p. 298.) In the opposite corner is a terra cotta lamp, the handle of which is formed by a cross with a dove perched upon it. It is copied from Rom. Sott. vol. III. pl. ccvii. ; and is intended to symbolise the lamp of the soul first lighted in baptism, but burning on unextinguished through the night of death to the morning of the resurrection.

Lastly, as the principal painting of this last set, and to conclude the whole series, in O 3, there is given, from the Cemetery of S. Agnes, an interesting representation of the Blessed Virgin and Child, the earliest probably existing, certainly the earliest known to exist, of the type afterwards called Byzantine, and multiplied with many varieties. In the first paintings of the Cemeteries in which the Blessed Virgin is represented with her Son, she is occupied with him as a mother and nurse, and

holds him out to the Magi, who come to adore him with their gifts. But here he is already a good-sized boy, who appears, clothed and self-supported, on her breast merely to show who she is, and what power she has in her prayers by being his mother; for she is praying with her arms expanded. The height of the crypt in which this painting occurs, and other signs in its neighbourhood, point of themselves to the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century as its date; but the painting itself enables us to fix the date within closer limits than is commonly to be thought of, the absence of the aureole from the heads of the figures forbidding us to think them later than the middle of the fourth century, while the presence of the monogram shows that they were painted after the accession of Constantine; at some time then between A.D. 312 and 350. (The same is given also in Rom. Sott. vol. III. pl. cliii.)

In the crypt in which this painting occurs, M<sup>rs</sup>. Talbot some years ago was permitted to celebrate mass, for the first time perhaps since the disuse of the Catacombs as cemeteries, in the presence of a number of English converts, who all received from his hands the Holy Communion on the spot. Since then P. Marchi, in taking strangers through the Catacomb of S. Agnes, has been often heard to call this crypt of the Madonna "the chapel of the English." For Russian visitors, too, it is of no less interest, as it enables them to trace their Byzantine type of the Virgin and Child, and in particular that variety of it which they call *Známenskaia*, to an antiquity as remote probably as the cessation of the last persecution, and the first foundation of Constantinople.

## **APPENDICES.**



## APPENDIX I.

THIS exhibits a fac-simile of a blasphemous Crucifix scratched on the wall of a bath in the palace of the Cæsars. It was found during some recent excavations on the slope of the Palatine towards the Circus, and the plaster containing the scratch having been carefully detached, it is now preserved in the Museum of the Roman College. A fac-simile, from which ours is taken, of the size of the original, was published in the *Civiltà Cattolica*, with an accompanying explanation.

The figure of a man clad in a dress not Roman, and with the head of an ass, is rudely represented on a cross formed like the letter T (for a slanting line above seems to be owing only to a slip of the pointed tool with which the scratch was made). A little below, to the right of the figure on the cross, but to the left of the spectator, is another man, in the same sort of dress, with an over-big head, and with his arms thrown apart in a mock attitude of prayer and admiration. A Greek inscription is added, "ΑΛΕΞΑΜΕΝΟΣ ΞΕΒΕΤΕ ΘΕΟΝ," "Here is Alexamenus, worshipping his God!"

Tertullian, a writer of the second century, having mentioned that already, in his time, the heathen had begun to mock the Christians by representing Christ as a man with an ass's head, in a gown, fixed to a cross, we are probably not wrong in ascribing this specimen of the same mockery to the third century. Two points proved by it are worthy of notice: First, against the Arians and other later impugnors of our Lord's divinity, it is here shown that the heathen themselves knew perfectly, in the third century, that the Christians worshipped Christ as their God. Secondly, against the Jews, the very heathen here proclaim that Christ, the Son of David, whom they had given up to Pilate to crucify, was not only their King but their God; the very same God that had appeared to Abraham, and had dwelt

in their Temple between the Cherubim. For it was a long-established blasphemy and mockery among the heathen to pretend that the God of the Jews was only an ass, or an ass's head. And as Pilate before had written that he whom the Jews rejected was the King of the Jews, so the heathen of the third century testified, even by their mockeries, that Christianity, which the Jews rejected, was nevertheless the true representation and development of the faith of Abraham and Moses.

The thought occurred to present in juxtaposition, one upon the other, that view of their own religion which the Christians of the third century have left painted at the tombs of their martyrs, and the view of the same religion expressed at the same time by the blaspheming heathen in the palace of the Cæsars. Such a combination, it was thought, might suggest useful reflections as to the different lights in which both Christ himself and his Church appear to the worldly and to the spiritual eye at all times, in the nineteenth century no less than in the third. For this end, instead of reproducing the blasphemous crucifix alone, it has been made to disfigure a repetition of the central painting A. 1. of the Composition of the Dispensation ; all that is spiritual, and seen properly only by the spiritual eye, being here painted in gold ; all that is indifferent, and merely natural, in natural colours ; and that which is bad being black. Thus the central figure of the Good Shepherd, with the sheep of universal redemption on his shoulders, and the flock of his elect at his feet, the two men representing the hierarchy, the rock on either side, and the graces given from the Rock through the hands of the clergy, are all in gold. The sky, the trees, and the grass are in natural colours ; as are also the two pairs of sheep to whom the Word is offered ; except that of these one on either side is white and the other black. The blasphemous crucifix, with its accompaniments, and a sort of den or cavern on which it is mounted, as on a Calvary, so that the ass's head may be upon the face of the Good Shepherd, are also in black.

The white sheep, who are found with a good and honest heart, and either drink in with simple love what they hear, or at least attend, and at length understand, see the Dispensation of Christ in its true character and proportions. But as for the black sheep, which have not the spiritual eye, these perhaps see only the scandal of the Cross, and have no disposition to be among

the worshippers of an ass, or an ass's head, which is to them foolishness, still less to cast in their lot with shame and suffering, which are symbolized by the Cross. Again, they see the true followers of Christ in what seems to them a black den of ignorance and superstition, grouped about a gigantic figure of which they see only the feet, while of its full proportions they have not the least idea. Or, lastly, they see a strange confusion of gold and ink, as of light and darkness; some things very beautiful certainly, and noble and attractive, such as the faces of Sisters of Charity, the acts of Confessors and Missionaries, or the sufferings of Chinese martyrs; other things, on the contrary, which seem to be absurd, false, unscriptural, and odious. So they are repelled, or at best perplexed; and they go on, turning their tails and eating grass, as before.

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## APPENDIX II.

These are four paintings copied for the author from the tomb of a woman named Vibia in a small cemetery or Catacomb of Gnostic heretics, at no great distance from the Cemetery of S. Callistus. Four others, from a similar arched tomb in the same gallery, and immediately opposite to that of Vibia, will form Appendix III. (Both sets have been published with notes by P. Garucci.)

These Gnostic paintings are added to the Compositions from the Christian cemeteries, as a contrast which may be suggestive of useful reflections. The cemetery in which they occur being of no great extent, and containing no other traces of painting, it may be inferred that the sect was far from numerous. The form of the galleries and niches is exactly the same with that of the Christian cemeteries, just as these, again, were reproductions of the earlier Jewish Catacomb, the original mother and pattern of them all. At some of the ordinary niches one sees on the plaster cabalistic marks peculiar to the Gnostics, and not occurring in the Christian Catacombs; and in the few inscriptions which have been found at the same spot, while there is nothing dis-



tinctly Christian, there are some expressions clearly inconsistent with Christian faith and piety. It is noticeable that the Christians (one of whose cemeteries was very near) and these Gnostics seem to have met in their excavations underground, and to have walled one another out. The wall still remains in part, though it has been broken through, so that now one can pass from the Gnostic into the Christian cemetery, and observe that while in the galleries on one side of the wall there are no traces of Christianity, in those on the other there are no traces of Gnosticism.

A few words may be useful to explain how this and other similar sects of the Gnostics took their origin from Christianity, and are reckoned among Christian heresies, while yet in details there are comparatively few traces of any such connexion. When the Gospel was first preached in the Roman empire, people of the higher classes, who spoke Latin and Greek, were mostly sceptics and sensualists. The ideas of a continuance of the soul after death, and of distinct awards of happiness or misery to the departed, were either absolutely forgotten, or but faintly remembered through the Eleusinian mysteries. In the East, on the contrary, among the Egyptians and other peoples subject to Rome, both these and other notions and practices connected with supranaturalism were still in vogue; and adventurers of all kinds, with all kinds of wares, astrology, magic, philosophy, and religion included, were attracted to the great cities of the empire, and especially to Rome.

Now to the eye of such adventurers there was doubtless something very striking and suggestive in the power and success of Christianity. They saw a few teachers despising all the world as sunk in ignorance, misery, and death, and offering to such as would listen to them some wonderful knowledge and happiness. They saw the followers of these teachers full of devotion and reverence towards them, placing their services, their means, often their whole properties, at their disposal, looking only for some future reward in another life. This new sect they saw rising up everywhere, and disturbing from below the dead materialism of society; and they thought, no doubt, that herein there was something to be imitated, if it could be imitated without sharing those persecutions to which the Christians were subjected. So some of these adventurers, professors originally perhaps of Oriental dualism, who had picked up some knowledge of

Judaism and Christianity, or who had even been themselves Christians (for Simon Magnus had been baptized), began to think that they, too, like the Christians, might pretend to be the depositaries of a *knowledge* and hope unknown to the outer world, and that they too might persuade disciples to honour them with their substance in like manner as the Christians honoured their clergy. This radical idea being borrowed from Christianity, it mattered little in what proportion the details of the system to be built upon it should be also borrowed from Christianity or from other sources; and, in fact, the proportions in which Christianity and Judaism were mixed with heathen elements may have differed widely in different Gnostic sects. We now return to the paintings before us.

On one of the two side-walls within the arch over the tomb of Vibia, that which is to the left of the spectator, as he stands in the gallery facing the tomb, is a painting, *a*, of Death, like Pluto, with a chariot and four horses, carrying off Vibia, who is represented like Proserpine, her hair, arms, and robe flying back in the wind, while Mercury, with his caduceus, is seen in front of the chariot, trundling a sort of wheel down hill, to show the way to the Shades. The colours are bright, much brighter than is usual in the Christian cemeteries; and above is an inscription, "*Abreptio Vibies et Descensio*," "The Carrying off of Vibia, and her Descent to the Shades." In the corners at top are the five planets influencing the fates of men.

On the opposite side-wall is a corresponding painting, *b*, representing the funeral banquet, for which Vibia, no doubt, has left money by her will. Seated at the table are seven men, five of them with beards, two without. An inscription above with these words, "*Septem Pii Sacerdotes*," "Seven Pious Priests," informs us that all the seven are priests of the Gnostics; and over the chief of them, who is one of the two without beards, is the Latin name "*Vincentius*." Three of the others have Oriental caps on their heads. The cushions, the dishes, and the meats, give one the idea of a good supper. Possibly the number seven may have here a sense attached to it borrowed from Christianity. The five planets are again seen in the corners above, and some lightly festooned drapery overhangs the supper-table.

Against the end-wall, and upon the roof of the arcisolium,

there are two more paintings, of which the first, *c*, represents the judgment of the souls of Vibia and Alcestis. In the midst, on a tribunal, as the presiding deities of the shades and judges of souls (answering to Osiris and Isis of the Egyptians), we see seated Pluto and Proserpine, with their names over them, "*Dis-pater*," "Father Dis," and "*Abracura*," probably Ἀβρὰ Κόρη, Κόρη being a name of Proserpine as daughter of Demeter or Ceres. To the right hand of Pluto, on the floor below, stand the three Fates, "*Fata Divina*," and opposite them, to the left of Proserpine, is "Mercury the Messenger," "*Mercurius Nuntius*," with the caduceus in his left hand, and a wand in his right, introducing the souls of "*Vibia*" and "*Alcestis*." In an Egyptian tomb this Mercury would have been Anubis. As Vibia and Alcestis were people of consideration, who besides had the benefit of *knowledge*, they are, of course, judged favourably.

In the fourth and last painting, *d*, there is a portal at the end to our left, and within it, on the threshold, a female figure, which is Vibia. Over the portal is the word "*Inductio*," "The Introduction," and within it, "*Vibies*," "of Vibia." Another figure already within is holding Vibia by the hand, and bringing her in. Over his head is the title "*Angelus Bonus*," "The Good Angel," a title borrowed from Judaism or Christianity. This "Good Angel" is crowned with a wreath, as if for some festivity, and he holds another wreath for Vibia in his hand. A little in advance of him, again, there is an attendant bringing in a dish for the banquet; for it is Elysium, and the Elysian banquet to which Vibia is now being introduced. The foreground seems to be a flowery carpet, or meadow, rising to a bank, and bounded as if it were a table by a cushion, behind which are seated *seven* figures, all crowned with wreaths, and over one of them, who is seated in the central place, is the name of "*Vibia*." A little higher, over all the seven, runs an inscription, "*Bonorum Judicio Judicati*," "These are they that have been judged with the judgment of the good," whence, again, one may collect that the number seven is here used in the Christian sense, to signify all, or universality. Beyond the cushion, where the flowery bank swells up to it, and supplies the place of a table, there are two dishes (one of them containing a fish) already set, besides a third, which the attendant already mentioned above is in the act of setting down. To the extreme right of the painting there is a

large amphora, set upright on a low stand; and on the carpet of flowers in the foreground there are two figures, one kneeling on both knees, and pointing down to the flowers, the other, with the sole of one foot on the ground, but still kneeling with the other knee, holding one finger to his mouth, as if to say, "Silence; mystery. This is our wisdom; this is our Γνῶσις; this is the paradise in store for the initiated."

On the flat wall of the gallery, immediately above this arcisolum, there is a rather long inscription, beginning with some mention of "Vincentius," perhaps having written (?) "this," but the plaster has been damaged. After the break the inscription proceeds as follows, Vibia speaking;—"All whom you see at table with me, and more than they, have preceded me: all must join me: eat then, drink, play, and amuse yourself, and come to me" [*i. e.* die after it]. "As long as you live do well [to yourself?] This you will carry away with you." And then breaking into hexameters she adds, "This is Vincentius, pontiff of the deity Sabazis, who with pious mind celebrated the sacred rites of the Gods." A much more impudent inscription, certainly, than one would have expected; and one that reminds us of the maxim imputed by S. Paul to the heathen, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Such was the hope of them whose god was their belly, whose religion was made, and held, and taught, for gain, and whose mind was set upon earthly things, while others were suffering martyrdom. It is instructive, certainly, to compare the tombs of the martyrs with these.

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## APPENDIX III.

The four paintings of the second Gnostic tomb add but little to the notions already collected from the first; but they are given for the sake of completeness, as there is nothing else of the same kind. The tomb seems to be that of a soldier named Caricus.

In one of the two side paintings to our right, *a*, Caricus, or one of the men to whom the tomb belongs, is seen in the garb of a soldier, with a spear and round shield, with a helmet on his head, in that attitude of half-kneeling which is often given to the worshippers of Mithras. In front of him stands a man, probably the priest of his sect, Vincentius, who is lifting up or offering for him to the five planets a hare, or some other similar animal. Under the planets is a mountain, perhaps intended for Gebel Serbâl, a mountain in the Sinaitic peninsula with five tops, where the five planets were worshipped. In the corresponding painting, *b*, on the opposite side-wall, to our left, another soldier, with a helmet on his head, his shield held over his left shoulder, and a drawn sword in his right hand, and in front of him a woman crowned with a wreath, are represented, both of them in the same half-kneeling attitude common in Mithraic sculptures.

A third painting, *c*, on the roof, has in a circle a female figure, a Venus, or Astarte, or Mylitta perhaps, with her back turned to the spectator; and again, within the four sides of a square which incloses the circle, there are gay birds, and dolphins, a mask, and a cornucopiæ.

The fourth painting, *d*, has two soldiers, and two winged boys, or genii, supporting from on either side two blank tablets, intended for inscriptions, but never filled up. The flat wall in front of the tomb below is painted in five compartments, and in the middle compartment of the five there is a sun, which again reminds us of the worship of Mithras, and indirectly of the Ori-

ental dualism. Above the tomb there is an inscription, shorter than that over the tomb of Vibia, but no less impudent. It is nearly as follows :—" To the Dii Manes, M. Aur. S. D. S. L. M., who gave or taught to his disciples pleasures and jokes, [made this tomb], that [he might have a place of burial here] for himself and his sons. Behold, this is the place of Caricus. [His] surviving issue." And the inscription is terminated by a palm-branch, such as the Christians also often marked on their tombs.

THE END.

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